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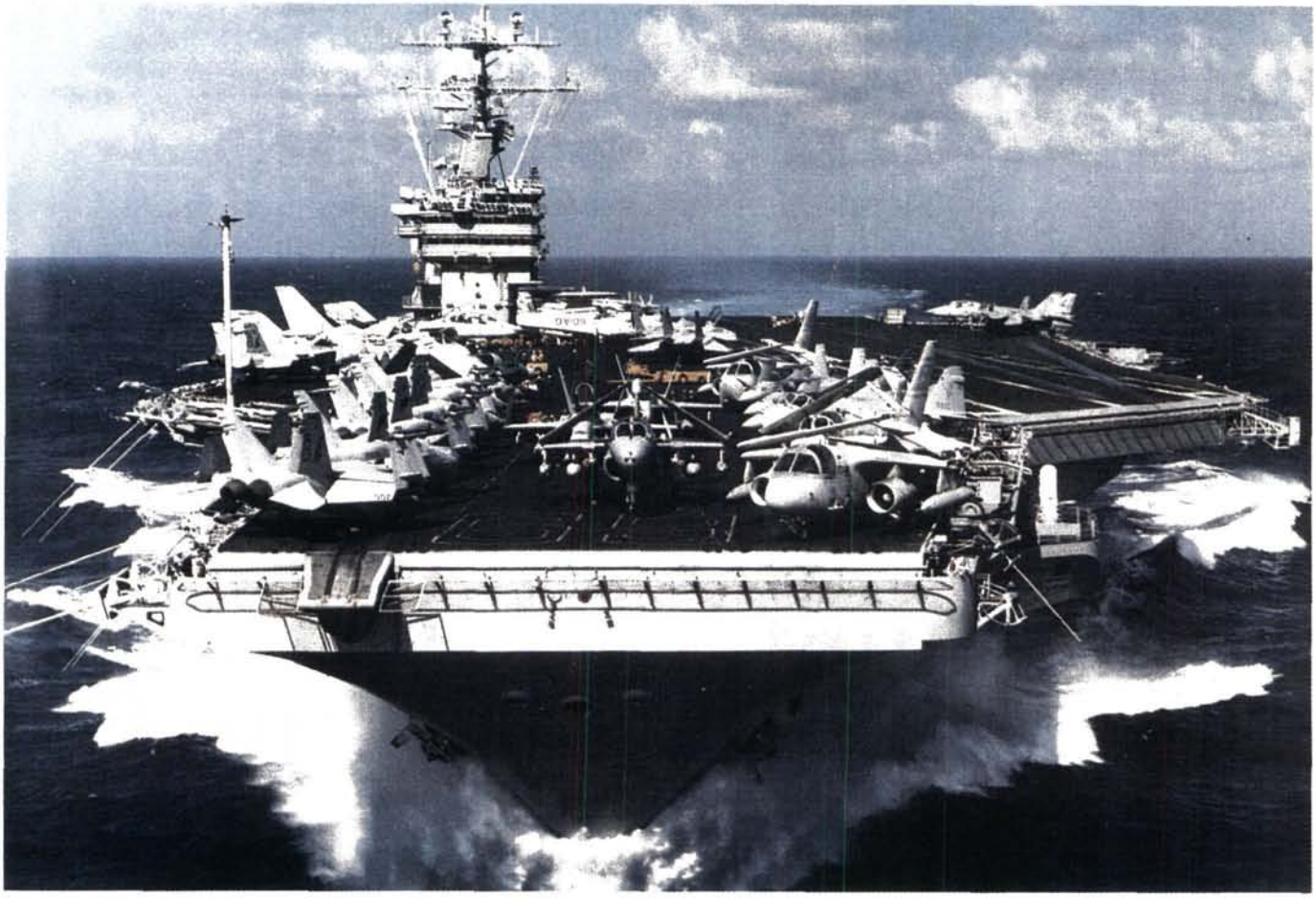

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CORRESPONDENCE

Far Left

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg's article titled "Mortification" in your September 20 & 27 edition does a serious disservice to the debate over Morton Halperin's record and fitness to become, as President Clinton proposes, a senior Pentagon official. It parrots a defense of that record that is now being circulated by Mr. Halperin and his partisans, a defense that obscures—rather than clarifies—the consistently far-left character of his writings, congressional testimony and public statements over twenty years.

Here is a selection from Halperin's paper trail: "Using secret intelligence agencies to defend a constitutional republic is akin to the ancient medical practice of employing leeches to take blood from feverish patients. The intent is therapeutic, but in the long run the cure is more deadly than the disease." (From *The Lawless State: The Crimes of the U.S. Intelligence Agencies,* 1976.)

"Secrecy ... does not serve national security.... Covert operations are incompatible with constitutional government and should be abolished." (From *The Nation,* 1987.)

"The FBI should be limited to the investigation of crime; it should be prohibited from conducting 'intelligence' investigations on groups or individuals not suspected of crimes." (From the Center for National Security Studies newsletter, *First Principles,* 1975.)

"The only way to stop [a pattern of abuse allegedly engaged in by U.S. intelligence agencies] is to impose an absolute requirement of public approval to bar paramilitary operations that are covert." (From *Foreign Policy,* 1988.)

"Under the First Amendment, Americans have every right to seek to 'impede or impair' the functions of any federal agency, whether it is the FTC or the CIA, by publishing information acquired from unclassified sources." (From THE NEW REPUBLIC, 1980.)

"International terrorism is rapidly supplanting the communist threat as the primary justification for wholesale deprivations of civil liberties and distortions of the democratic process." (From *Foreign Policy,* 1990-91.)

These statements are symptomatic of Mr. Halperin's views. They are not exceptions quoted, as Weisberg contends, "selectively and tendentiously," with a view to misrepresenting or "smearing" the nominee. Neither are they misquotes or positions taken out of context in a misleading manner. Instead, they are accurate reflections of the kinds of dubious positions and policy recommendations enunciated for decades by someone who has served as a senior official of the American Civil Liberties Union and other far-left organizations.

The Senate Armed Services Committee will, presumably, have an ample opportunity to investigate where the truth lies about some of the other issues on which Weisberg rises to Mr. Halperin's defense, including: Halperin's real position on aid to the Nicaraguan contras (which on October 2, 1983, he described to the Associated Press as "ineffective and immoral"); his role in the Pentagon Papers affair (Daniel Ellsberg was so close to Halperin that he lived in the latter's home during part of the period in which the former was stealing these highly classified documents); official assessments of Mr. Halperin's trustworthiness with classified information (including numerous investigations into his possible involvement in leaks of secret information); and Mr. Halperin's connections with CIA turn-coat Philip Agee (he acknowledges traveling to the U.K. to testify on Agee's behalf as the government was trying to deport Agee).

For the moment, suffice it to say that I am confident that such an investigation by sober, Armed Services Committee members—on both sides of the political aisle—will affirm the doubts I have expressed about the nominee's past judgment and present fitness for a sensitive post in the Department of Defense.

FRANK J. GAFFNEY, JR.
Washington, D.C.

No real change

To the editors:

In his August 9 TRB, "Clinton's Trouble," Michael Kinsley got it wrong. Clinton's troubles are not caused by the perception that Clinton is "asking the middle class to take a financial hit." This misreads both the polls and the last election. The source of his trouble on the budget package is a lack of trust. Voters simply do not believe that the new tax increases—whoever pays them—will go to reduce the deficit—what voters really want. The backroom politics by which Clinton eked out his majority in both Houses merely confirms the public belief that there has been no real change in Washington.

Voter mistrust is why Representative John Kasich's slogan, now the Republican creed, "spending cuts first," is such

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–Christine Schwartz, *Village Voice Literary Supplement*

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an effective attack on the Clinton budget plan. It plays on the popular notion that any tax increases will go to finance new spending and will not go to reduce the deficit. Put colloquially, voters believe that good money is being thrown after bad.

A consequence of this understanding of the popular mood ought to be obvious to Clinton and the Democrats. If they succeed in delivering meaningful deficit reduction—and avoid the temptation to spend the new revenue on new or existing programs—the electorate will reward them. Indeed, Clinton will have gone a long way in addressing his own greatest personal political weakness. Voters may stop distrusting him.

A similar message ought to be obvious to Republicans: Be careful with the rhetoric used to attack the Clinton plan. Arguments that artificially set too high a standard may backfire. If Democrats can deliver on their deficit reduction promises in the next two budget years—the ones that must be voted on before the 1996 election—a substantial portion of the electorate, perhaps the crucial margin, will migrate to Clinton.

Of course, Mr. Kinsley did get one thing right. Clinton's trouble has little to do with a perception that he is left-wing. The 1992 election provided ample evidence that ideology is not the central concern of swing voters in the electorate. Political responsibility is.

ROBERT T. SWANSON
Arlington, Virginia

Boring and pointless

To the editors:

In her review of David Brock's *The Real Anita Hill: The Untold Story*, Jean Bethke Elshtain writes: "*The New Yorker* published a lengthy and interesting rebuttal of Brock, but then it declined to publish Brock's rebuttal of the rebuttal, thereby vitiating the proudly empirical spirit of its own article."

Brock's letter to us was 4,000 words long. It consisted entirely of factual, or rather purportedly factual, quibbles. We chose not to publish it after reaching two conclusions: first, that it did not advance the discussion of the Hill-Thomas controversy in a useful or interesting way; and second, that its factual content was nugatory.

Reaching the first conclusion was easy. Reaching the second required a bit of doing. Tina Brown, the editor of *The New Yorker*, asked Tom De Kay, who had fact-checked the review (which was written by Jane Mayer and Jill Abramson), to examine each of the allegations in Brock's letter. The result was an 8,000-word memo refuting the allegations one by one.

When Brown wrote to Adam Bellow, Brock's editor at The Free Press, informing him of her decision not to publish the Brock letter, she appended to her note a copy of De Kay's memo. By then the Brock letter had been widely circulated to the press, as we, for our part, have made the De Kay memo available to inquiring reporters. So both documents are part of the public record. *The New Yorker* is under no obligation to establish its empirical bona fides by publishing material it deems boring and pointless. You, on the other hand, are perfectly welcome to publish the lot.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG
Executive Editor, The New Yorker
New York, New York

Executive Mansion

To the editors:

As an amateur Faulkner scholar, I read with interest the "newly discovered" Faulkner manuscript in the September 6, 1993, issue ("Blythe Spirit," by Jacob Weisberg). Its lyrical passages reminded me that Faulkner had already foretold the coming of "Slick Willie" in the person of Senator Clarence Egglestone Snopes. I enclose a few excerpts from *The Mansion* to illustrate how prescient Faulkner was:

> Senator C. Egglestone Snopes now, with a definite belly and the pouched eyes and a lower lip now full from talking, forensic. Because Clarence was making speeches, anywhere and everywhere, at bond rallies and women's clubs, anyplace or occasion where there was a captive audience...
>
> Which was probably when he [Senator Snopes] really discerned at last the breadth and splendor of his rising destiny: with amazement and incredulity at the apparently limitless expanse and who knows? maybe even humility too that he should have been chosen, found worthy—that limitless field for his capacity and talents; not merely to beat, hammer men into insensibility and submission, but to use them...
>
> [he] knew what Clarence's aim, ambition was and had been all the time: Washington, Congress.... With everyone else it was triumph and exaltation: Who had ever ridden Clarence's coattails to the (comparatively) minor league hog trough at Jackson [Little Rock] and who saw now the clear path to that vast and limitless one in Washington.
>
> He will be elected to Congress for the simple reason that if he fails to be elected, there is nothing else he can do that anybody on earth would pay him for on Saturday night....

If he had only lived, Faulkner could have added a fourth volume to the Snopes trilogy, *The Executive Mansion.*

F. CARTER TATE
via fax

Just the beginning

To the editors:

Cole Porter may have noted that "When you begin the begats, it's hard to know when to stop," as Michael Kinsley reported in TRB, August 23 & 30. But Cole Porter began the "beguine" in 1935. It was E. Y. Harburg (lyrics) and Burton Lane (music) who began "The Begat" in *Finian's Rainbow* in 1947. The word of God also needed a few composers.

MICHAEL KRASNER
Mountainside, New Jersey

Vulgar

To the editors:

In his vulgar misrepresentation of my commentary favoring a generous immigration policy and the need for social assimilation, Michael Lind purports to see the threat to what he calls "limited but real gains to sexual freedom and tolerance." He writes that I propose "precisely what nineteenth-century Protestant nativists feared—a bid for social and political hegemony by American Catholics, whose numbers have been swelled by immigration." To judge by Lind's reaction, that fear is not alien to late twentieth-century nativists as well. The fear is as hysterical now as it was then. Incidentally, and while I do not know why Lind thinks it pertinent to the argument, I am not an "immigrant from Canada," but was born in Canada to parents who were United States citizens.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
Editor in chief, First Things
New York, New York

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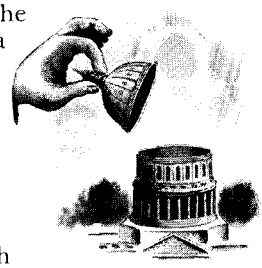
FROM WASHINGTON

Trading places

The fate of the North American Free Trade Agreement rests with the Republicans in the House of Representatives. The agreement appears safe in the Senate. But in the House, where more than three out of five Democrats are opposed, the support of two out of three Republicans is needed to assure passage. And Republicans are said to be deserting NAFTA daily.

The opposition of left-wing Democrats to free trade is principled—mistaken, but principled. Congressional Republicans who vote against NAFTA, by contrast, are purely opportunistic. How many speeches have these politicians given, in their lifetimes, about the virtues of free-market capitalism, the iniquity of taxation, the importance of getting the government off people's backs? Yet here is a proposal to eliminate tariffs and quotas and let Americans buy and sell what they wish, unmolested by the government—which these Republicans oppose.

Why any politician abandons his or her alleged principles is not a mystery worth dwelling on for long. In the case of Republican NAFTA opponents, one explanation is fear of being caught on the wrong side of Ross Perot's demagoguery. But an even less admirable explanation is the wish to hand Bill Clinton a political defeat—no matter what the subject. NAFTA was negotiated by the Bush administration. It is inconceivable that dozens of Republican members of Congress would be voting against it if George Bush had been re-elected.



And complaints about the Clinton-negotiated "side agreements" are merely cover for the abandonment of principle. Whatever the validity of these complaints—and they are almost entirely bogus—who honestly believes that they are what motivates the opposition? Complaints that the agreement is "not really free trade" are equally disingenuous; the opposition to NAFTA, to which these politicians are truckling, is based on fear that it is indeed free trade, not concern that it isn't.

The politics of trade are a paradigm of America's general political dilemma. They illustrate why "change," though we all claim to want it, is so hard to come by. There is no doubt that free trade is a net benefit for the country as a whole. But there is also no doubt that it hurts certain individuals. Unfortunately the benefits are spread among the general population and often hard to identify specifically, while the harm is concentrated on a few identifiable—and politically organized—interests. The person who will get a job because of NAFTA isn't even aware of it yet; the person who may lose a job because of NAFTA is all too aware. The millions who will enjoy cheaper food and clothing thanks to NAFTA aren't lobbying for it; but the farming and textile interests that will face new competition are lobbying against it.

NAFTA will benefit Americans in two ways, one of which doesn't get enough emphasis. Yes, it will create jobs—more jobs than it eliminates—by building a bigger market in Mexico for American products. But giving Americans access to cheaper Mexican products is also a plus, not a minus. The debate over how low Mexican wages really are misses the point. The lower they are, the better deal this is for America. In importing Mexican products we are, after all, buying Mexican labor. The less we pay, the bigger the bargain. (And opponents of NAFTA should spare us their crocodile tears for the Mexicans who take these low-wage jobs, since the alternative they are offering is even lower wages—or unemployment.)

The people of the United States cannot grow richer as a society by paying ourselves $16 an hour for work foreigners are willing to do for us for just $3. Attempting this trick is to abandon economics for alchemy. But when a $16-an-hour American loses his job to a $3-an-hour Mexican—and it will happen under NAFTA, though not nearly as often as opponents charge—fairness, political prudence and a common sense of concern for America's future dictate that some of society's savings be used to cushion the blow for that person, and retrain him or her for work

continued on page 41

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 4, 1993

SUPERCUTS

In the final days of hostage negotiations over the Clinton budget bill, recalcitrant Democrats in the House and Senate extracted a remarkable concession from the president and the Democratic leadership. Instead of tangible benefits for their constituents, new bridges or airports, a few independent-minded legislators asked instead for another crack at cutting government spending. Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, the final Senate holdout, set as his condition for supporting the bill the opportunity to give a prime-time floor speech urging Clinton back to the "high road" of real sacrifice. Then a group of centrist House Democrats, led by Tim Penny of Minnesota, got the leadership to agree to a vote on a package of additional cuts this fall. Finally, freshman Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky obtained Clinton's promise to participate in a one-day conference on entitlement spending in her Pennsylvania district—an unusual favor, to say the least.

Anti-spending fervor lingered in the air through the August recess, aided by Al Gore's National Performance Review, which has put a further spotlight on streamlining and reducing the costs of government. But now that they're back in Washington, the bulk of Democratic and Republican legislators seem united in a quiet conspiracy to make the fad go away. Budget cutting, it's true, isn't much fun. That's why it's up to the few, true deficit hawks in Congress to make the White House and the leadership follow through on their commitment to more cuts. Deficit reduction may never be this trendy again.

The moment is especially ripe to call the bluff of those who fulminate endlessly against spending in general, but who get away without specifying any cuts in particular. Take, as a completely random example, Newt Gingrich, standard-bearer in the Republican "cut spending first" brigade. Cobb County, Georgia, which encompasses Gingrich's suburban district, is a hotbed of anti-tax, anti-spending zealotry. It is also, however, the third most heavily subsidized county in the country, according to a study in the latest issue of *Common Cause Magazine.* Now, Gingrich may be a principled conservative who objects to much of this spending even though it benefits the people who elected him. Or he may be a noisy hypocrite. He deserves a chance to demonstrate his political integrity by voting against the most egregious federal handouts that benefit his constituents.

If budget knives are now being sharpened on Capitol Hill, it's hard to hear them. Kerrey has brought forward no list of specific cuts. Nor has David Boren or Richard Shelby, who both voted against the Clinton budget on grounds that it didn't trim enough. Nor, for that matter, has Ross Perot, though he continues to bluster that he has one. Penny says that according to the agreement he has worked out with House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt and Office of Management and Budget director Leon Panetta, the first move is due from the White House in October. At that point, Penny says, he will offer an amendment to cut the deficit by an additional $100 billion over five years. Great. The bidding should start there, with deficit-hawks vying desperately with each other to prove their credentials. Ladies and gentlemen, your lists, please.

What would we propose? To start with, two reforms that would take an enormous whack out of entitlement spending. The first is to eliminate all future cost-of-living increases for upper-income Social Security recipients. The second is to means-test Medicare premiums, making well-to-do seniors contribute more to their health care. Depending on where levels are set, these two changes could cut federal spending by hundreds of billions of dollars without harming anyone who is poor. So that the burden is shared, however, we would cut discretionary programs that benefit non-elderly members of the middle and upper classes as well. We'd start by terminating all agricultural subsides ($10-20 billion a year, plus indirect costs), liquidating the Small Business Administration ($1 billion) and phasing out urban mass transit and airport subsidies ($21 billion over five years).

Given the public clamor for fiscal sanity, the conventional wisdom about the political hazards of cutting popular spending programs may be due for some revision. In the present climate, it actually would be difficult for most Republicans—and even many Democrats—to cast a public vote against a bill that did nothing but reduce federal expenditures. Our list is ambitious, but it's as good a place to start as any. Even a fractional version of it would be an enormous achievement. If it's not enough, we can have another round of trimming after next year's budget-making process. It would be a very un-Washington annual event. But this was supposed to be a very un-Washington Congress. •

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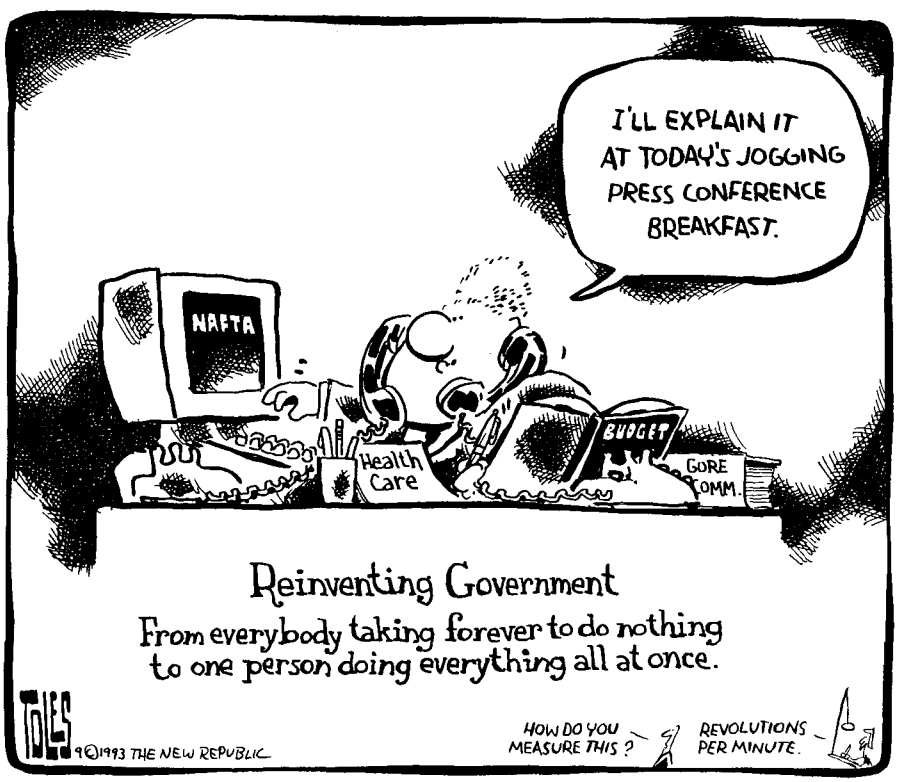
NOTEBOOK

TAKE IT AWAY, ROSS PEROT: The paper industry, in the form of the American Forest and Paper Association, has succeeded in watering down a proposed Clinton directive that would have required the federal government to buy paper containing 25 percent recycled materials. The figure will now be 10 percent, the current industry norm. The paper producers accomplished their goal after former Clinton chief of staff and campaign aide Betsey Wright, now a lobbyist, arranged for a meeting of paper industry executives and White House officials. "All I did was ask for help to cut through the red tape," Wright told *The Washington Post.* "The one thing I can't bear is people who think they can't be heard." Experienced readers will recognize this as the traditional mating call of the Washington influence-peddler. Calling all corporations! If you want to be "heard" in the Clinton White House, Betsey Wright really wants to help. All you need to do is pay her and her firm, the Wexler Group, a nice fee. Didn't Michael Deaver get into trouble for this sort of thing? Didn't Clinton pledge to end it?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REVOLUTIONS PER MINUTE.

SALVATION BY BETA-CAROTENE: Most of the booths at last week's Christian Coalition "Road to Victory 1993" conference at the Washington Hilton featured conservative or religious-themed T-shirts and books. Some solicitors, though, tried to recruit salespeople for KaloVita, an Amway-like direct-marketing firm of which Pat Robertson is "founder, endorser and owner," according to Phil Brecheiser, one of its national directors. The 2-year-old for-profit company sells vitamins, concentrated household detergents and a line of skin creams made of mud from the Sea of Galilee. Robertson, Brecheiser says, donates his profits to causes such as the International Red Cross and his own legal agency, the American Center for Law and Justice.

DON'T ASK, DON'T VOTE: The Sam Nunn codification of the Clinton-Powell compromise passed the Senate last week, and took the media somewhat by surprise. It shouldn't have. It's no different than the ugly amendment proposed last July (see Notebook, TNR, August 16, 1993), and the only novel development was that the Clinton administration bizarrely tried to generate support for it. They claim the codification doesn't actually contradict anything the president has proposed, and that the proof of this will be a sharp drop in the future in discharges on grounds of homosexuality. We hope the administration is right (and we'll be closely monitoring the situation). Meanwhile, an honor call for those thirty-three senators who risked unpopularity to vote for Barbara Boxer's alternative, which avoids congressional codification completely: Senators Kerrey, D'Amato and Robb especially. The House votes on a similar amendment to Boxer's soon, sponsored by Representative Meehan. The Boxer amendment did better than expected, and there's a chance that the House version could do better still. Those Democrats who want to support their president's deal (and not Nunn's) and those Republicans who believe Congress has no business deciding military personnel policy, should vote for Meehan's amendment. It's the sanest end to this traumatic battle—and a way for Congress to avoid legislating for the first time in history actual discrimination against gay men and lesbians.

SOMEWHAT LATE INTERVENTION: It was, we suppose, only a matter of time, but, yes, on September 15, Senator Edward Kennedy held a press conference to announce his sponsorship of the "Gender Equity in Education Act," aimed at—you guessed it—curbing sexual harassment in schools. "You have first-, second- and third-grade harassers," he said. "You have kindergarten harassers. We're reaching out and identifying them at the earliest grades, disciplining these individuals. As with every aspect of health care, early intervention can have a big impact." •

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BETHLEHEM POSTCARD

MOTHER DOLORES

By Simon Sebag Montefiore

The nuns are bringing in the harvest on the hottest day of the year in Connecticut when I arrive at the Abbey of Regina Laudis to meet Mother Dolores, who was, once upon a time, an exquisitely beautiful film actress named Dolores Hart. It is difficult to understand how the blond, 24-year-old star of *Where the Boys Are* and Elvis Presley's *King Creole* could have given up the glories of Hollywood fame to become a cloistered nun of the Benedictine order. Her taking of holy orders in 1962 is usually described by supermarket tabloids as "a mystery." Lurid tales have circulated ever since.

Once you experience the calm rhythm of life at the abbey, it is no longer a mystery. "Would you like to come and stay and see how we live?" she had asked me over the phone a few days before. "Monastic life is very simple. But you can't formally interview me. The Archbishop of Hartford banned interviews twenty years ago. I can't promise we'll meet." I presume she invited me in order to clear the air about a nasty rumor. Her obscurity was recently shattered by Philip Stanic, an ex-lion tamer from Gary, Indiana, who changed his name to Elvis Presley Jr., and claimed his parents were Elvis Presley and . . . Mother Dolores.

The crotchety Sister Mary Elizabeth picks me up at Southbury bus station in a big-wheeled pick-up truck and drives me toward Bethlehem. Only seven out of forty-seven nuns ever leave the estate to run errands. The rest spend their lives there. We drive past signs that wish "pax" (peace) to visitors, though the abbey may owe its existence to war. In 1944 the Lady Abbess, a practiced surgeon who at the time was an American doctor working for the Resistance in France, had her epiphany: it came as she first glimpsed the Army star on the side of General Patton's tanks.

To enter the abbey, a converted factory enclosed by a wooden wall, is to enter something resembling a Tuscan farm at the turn of the century. The nuns here run a 400-acre crop and livestock farm, harvesting their own hay, breeding their own animals, delivering calves, plowing fields. Once inside the abbey gates, I hear the engine of an archaic tractor and jump out of the way just as it whizzes by. A nun is hunched over the wheel in her full habit, driving as recklessly as the biblical King Jehu drove his chariots.

Dinner is served, all of it produced on the estate: fresh, plentiful and delicious. Still, I haven't even seen Mother Dolores. After dinner, I wander around the farm and bump into Mother Stephen, the Land Master (a medieval title) who drives her tractor so manically. Brought up on a Minnesota farm, the weathered and endlessly energetic nun is feeding cows. When I ask about Mother Dolores, she sighs: "Everyone here is blessed with some special gift."

Between praying and farming, the nuns are constantly busy. They rise during the night at 1:15 a.m. to sing Matins and at 6:15 a.m. for Lauds. Mass is at 8 a.m., followed by breakfast. Mother Dolores is nowhere to be found. After mass, I attend the Guest Master's "Parlor," a sweltering confessional box smelling of pinewood. Through a thick wooden grill, Mother Placid, a 66-year-old artist at the abbey since 1949, lectures me on the lives of the saints. "It's usual for our guests to help while they stay," she adds. I offer to harvest.

The haying is a surreal but idyllic sight: flaxen fields smelling sweetly under an orange sun. The earth is baking hot. My fellow harvesters, who sweat and labor with me, are nuns in full habits, including whimples. On their feet they wear sneakers or boots. Still there is no sign of Mother Dolores. Mother Stephen careens around the field on her tractor, yelling out commands. She drives much too fast, the tractor looking like a crazed insect buzzing across the golden fields. We follow, collecting the bales spat out by the ancient bale-making machine, throwing them onto trucks. It is hard, feverish work. The only way to avoid heatstroke is to swig the iced lemonade stored in vats by the side of the field.

It is early evening. Inexplicably, Mother Placid again commands my presence in Saint Placid's Parlor. The door opens. There, finally, sits Mother Dolores. She is 54 and still very beautiful. Her face is ruled by a most gentle calmness. We shake hands through the wooden grill as Mother Placid looks on. On the phone, Mother Dolores had quaintly called Elvis "Mr. Presley" when she denied the persistent rumor that they were lovers: "I had a very good, sound, clean relationship with Mr. Presley; we were good friends. He was one of the finest persons I ever worked with. No one can spoil our association." Mother Dolores says the ex-lion tamer has "gone quiet": "The young man's own mother is looking for him. She called here and says he won't respond to her because she knows Elvis Presley was not the father."

How bizarre it is that this is the same Dolores who starred with the movie titans of another age—Montgomery Clift, Connie Francis, Anthony Quinn, Walter Matthau. But to her, there is nothing odd about it. When she was 10, Dolores embraced Catholicism to survive her unhappy Chicago upbringing. Her parents were alcoholics. In 1956 her roommate sent pictures of Dolores to the studios. Paramount Pictures signed her up for a seven-year contract. Days later she was acting beside Elvis. She was an international star almost overnight. At 18, she won her first role with Presley in *Loving You*; at 20, she starred on Broadway as the poor

continued on page 12

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SPEW & OUTRAGE

Who is "Scoop" Cohen?

The White House Travel Office scandal has careened into the void. But once again, it appears, the Constitutional order may be under threat from a secret cabal within the government. This time, the villain is an innocuous-seeming young man who goes by the name "Scoop" Cohen. Cohen, one of the special prosecutor law's most ferocious fans, it seems, is also an enemy of electronic democracy — an idea once highly touted by the Clintonistas and the rest of the Democratic plantation but now fallen by the wayside with the rest of their broken promises.

According to a rumor that has come to our attention, Mr. Cohen sometimes makes fun of Rush Limbaugh for being overweight. As readers of ours will have heard, the incredibly popular populist Mr. Limbaugh actually suffers from a thyroid problem—not simple overeating and piggishness like Mr. Cohen's commander-in-chief, we are pleased to note.

We are particularly interested in the possible connection here to Jackson Stephens, a financial backer of the Clinton campaign linked to BCCI, the House bank scandal, the 1990 budget resolution, Hurricane Emily, Michael Jackson, UltrAir, the unconscionable defeat of Robert Bork's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court, the in-flight disappearance of the NASA Mars probe and the failure of the world's greatest deliberative body to lower the capital gains tax. Throw the bums out! Term limits now. That's what we've said before. And in case you forgot, we'll say it again. Cut cap gains!

Now, we wouldn't want to make too much of these connections. It may all be nothing more than mere coincidence. But what we need to be told is whether Mr. Cohen's contempt for the most popular figure in our electronic democracy portends contempt for our laws and our civilization in general. Because if it does, then we stand once more on the brink of the kind of anarchy the Clinton generation unleashed during the 1960s, which made possible the regulatory chokehold of the Bush-Clinton administration and the mendacious delusions of Anita Hill. Viva Newt!

Because Mr. Cohen has not deigned to return our many calls to his office this afternoon, the *Journal* has issued a FOIA request to find out Mr. Cohen's *real first name* and whether he is in fact preparing a secret plan to rule the country by diktat. After more than three hours, there has been no reponse from Bernard Nussbaum, the White House Counsel, or from the president himself, though we haven't checked the fax machine in a while. Now, to our dismay, we learn that Mr. Cohen works in the same wing of the White House as Catherine Cornelius, the president's cousin, who is better known as the Lady Macbeth of the ill-fated travel office caper. Some people might find this suspicious. It may be that Hillary Clinton, and other former members of the Rose law firm, including Webb Hubbell, William Kennedy III and Vince Foster — Oops! scratch that — are also involved in this plan. It's time for the president to appoint a special prosecutor. Or better still, someone should take away this man's belt and shoelaces, because we don't want to be blamed for what may happen when his plans to impose an Orwellian socialist dictatorship in which the capital gains tax would be increased goes awry. We told you so. This situation bears watching.

Notes and Asides

We note with interest that Hurricane Eric fortuitously avoided the North Carolina Coast recently, sparing Jesse Helms's state extensive damage. What a relief. And at last sighting, Eric was seen heading toward Cambridge, Massachusetts. As the youth pop-cultural icons, Beaver and Butthead, might put it, "Cool."

BY PAUL JOHNSON

The tortuous logic, or lack of it, that o now hears from the serried and no dou fetid ranks of chattering middle-class "pr gressives" on the subject of what we used call the Eastern Question, never fails to hc rify and appal. My friend, Lord Sebag-Ree Fogg, whose own benighted grandfather w related to many poor souls in that torture heathen region, has taken to remarking up the uncanny parallels between the chatteri classes of today and the fellow-traveling li erals of yesteryear who were only too willi recklessly to march the sons and daughters ordinary folk, the kind who would nev have read the collected works of the fashio

An Apple a Da

Manufacturing firms in the Midwest a having remarkable success with an ol fashioned technique for raising employe morale and productivity. An afternoon snac or "coffee break" can result in startling gai in output, and at minimal cost.

Take Tractorpull International in Kenosh Wisc. Since the top earner's pay dropped fro $15.90 to $4.62 an hour as a result of cos cutting moves last year, the company's sho floor had degenerated into a focus of industri accidents and anti-management "jokes." Tl quality products for which the firm was knov were no longer coming off the assembly line

As part of an incentive program, midd managers started distributing Snickers bars employees willing to inform on pro-unic colleagues. When the company's workfor responded positively, the program w expanded to provide a piece of fruit and a h water-based beverage for everyone on tl

ATM Machine

To get cash from the bank these days
Isn't hard,
when you've got a little card.
But after taxes
Everyone relaxes
– Melvin Smith

— — —

The Farmer's in the Dell
The Farmer's in the Dell
Heigh-ho,
The Dairy-o
The Farmer's in the Dell.
– Traditional

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The Eastern Question—Again

ıle writer, Susan Sontag, into the guns of e Spanish Civil War.

eep Going

That they are now enlisted in the camıign of militant Islam against the anent redoubts of Christian Europe is surely ıough to make ordinary Americans (many of whom I have met in the convivial "bars" on the main streets of the American Middle West) quake in their boots. The call to intervene in Europe has come before, of course, and it has been answered, deep in the generous heart of America, a country slow to rouse but awful in its subsequent ire, in the affirmative.

The call to intervene in Europe has come before, of course, and it has been answered, deep in the generous heart of America, a country slow to rouse but awful in its subsequent ire, in the affirmative.

Nearly There

And what of conservatism? If, once upon a time, conservatives felt a Burkean responsibility to uphold sound social habits and traditional customs against liberal debunking, now it is liberalism that constitutes the old order, dictating "correct" habits and permissible customs, while conservatives can become the exponents of light and air, of free and open debate, of demystification and even of political and intellectual liberation.

Indeed, as the ever-lovely Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven never fails to point out (and I never fail to note), without the guiding star of the United States, there will never be peace in Europe; and the full commitment of American military might is surely necessary to ensure that the evil powers of this dark continent, separated from my friend Lord Fogg's estate (whose grouse-hunting grounds I have recently had the privilege of savoring) by a mere stream of ancient ocean, be they emanating from Belgrade or Brussels or Berkeley (that ever-flowing source of Political Correctness—as you Americans term it), do not eclipse the dwindling liberties of the brave little Bosnians, even now fighting for their life.

U.N. Official

Is That It?

If young president Clinton wishes to emulate his illustrious predecessors and wrest himself free from the thrall of his pusillanimous advisers, he would do well to heed the advice of an old Bosnia hand (yes, my friend, Lord Fogg). If you wish for peace, prepare for war.

Paul Johnson's latest book is "Pre-Modern Times: A History of Urdu-Speaking Peoples 2700 BC-1804" (Simon & Sebag-Rees-Schuster).

eeps the Health Care Provider Away

Manager's Journal

By Lindsey Buckingham, Jr.

sembly line.

Almost immediately, claims against the mpany's health insurance plan dropped me 11 percent. R & D investment tripled. dustrial accidents declined. Production sts dropped 83 percent and new orders dou-ed. Revenues skyrocketed. The company's ock declared a dividend, split, split again, d many top executives jumped at the ance to take "golden parachute" buyouts orth millions of dollars.

Heavy Metal, Inc., of Iron River, Pennsylnia, hopes to build on Tractorpull's sucss. The company—for which my firm s worked as an outside management consultant—now hopes to spur its workers to new heights with an afternoon nap or "quiet time." Unlike the afternoon snack at Tractorpull, the cost of this benefit is docked from wages, as befits a business struggling to survive without a capital gains tax cut. But because the company pays its illegal workers only a sub-minimum wage, employees have found that a half-hour nap costs less than $2. Some take the entire day off, which has meant lower labor costs without cutting jobs.

Following Heavy Metal's example, businesses across America may soon be giving the phrase "lying down on the job" a whole new meaning.

Lindsey Buckingham, Jr. is a part-time independent management and financial consultant based in Rockford, Ill. These opinions are his own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Buckingham, Inc.

Pepper ... and Salt

"I got this one in the culture wars."

Notable & Quotable

Dictator Adolph Hitler, writing in his autobiography, "Mein Kampf":

A majority can never replace the man.... Just as a hundred fools do not make one wise man, an heroic decision is not likely to come from a hundred cowards."

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little rich girl in *The Pleasure of His Company*. Her most famous role was in *Where the Boys Are*, but she also starred in *Lisa, The Plunderers, St. Francis of Assisi, King Creole* and *Lonely Hearts*.

When she left acting to become a nun in 1962, the press speculated that she had either suddenly been struck like Saint Paul on the road to Damascus or else she was pregnant. The Elvis industry has fostered the latter canard ever since. But she says it was a gradual process: "Most of us normal mortals don't get revelations. Only soul searching brings a knowledge of what your life will be. It sounds sudden when you announce it because people don't know what has gone before."

Mother Dolores does not stay long. The archbishop must be obeyed, and it is harvest. But I have learned enough. It is, it turns out, too perfect a turn of events that Dolores hated Hollywood and turned to God. "There's always a continuity," she explains. "In the dimension of monastic life, there is a 'role' in prayer that certainly keeps me very much a part of it. You see, for me, being a nun *is* being an actress." Does she then look back and realize she enjoyed her fame? She answers with the light-hearted exhilaration of a schoolgirl on her first audition: "Oh, by all means!"

SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE is the author of *King's Parade* (Penguin Books).

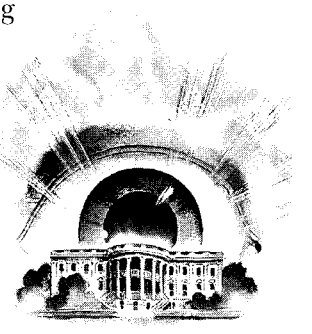
WHITE HOUSE WATCH

BETTER LATE

By Fred Barnes

Once President Clinton telephoned President Salinas of Mexico late one night in early August, his last chance to abandon the fight for ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement was gone. The call was to put the finishing touches on the labor and environmental side agreements to the treaty. Clinton had listened to a new anti-NAFTA argument from a handful of aides: it probably won't pass Congress, so why fight for it? Instead, the president was urged to "tank it," as one senior official put it, by instructing his negotiators to make demands in the side agreements that the Mexicans would never accept. Then, when the talks broke down, he could blame Mexico. "I'm not going to do that," Clinton had snapped. On August 13, a few days after the chat with Salinas, the side agreements were finalized.

Clinton has never wavered on NAFTA, originally negotiated by President Bush. "Not for a minute," insists aide George Stephanopoulos, who has wavered. (Stephanopoulos is cool to the treaty, but loves the side agreements.) When economist Jeff Faux of the Economic Policy Institute attacked NAFTA while briefing Clinton in November 1991, Clinton cut him off. "I'm for free trade," he said. "I'm going to support it [NAFTA]." In September 1992, William Daley asked about the treaty as he rode with Clinton during a campaign stop in Chicago, Daley's hometown. "He went into a long conversation about the strengths of NAFTA," Daley says. Early in Clinton's presidency, Jim Jones, president of the American Stock Exchange, was recruited to be ambassador to Mexico. Jones said he'd take the post only if Clinton was committed to NAFTA. Clinton said he was. And in August, when Daley and former Republican Congressman Bill Frenzel of Minnesota were asked to run the White House's campaign to ratify NAFTA, both sought a promise of an all-out fight for NAFTA. Clinton promised.



But Clinton's steadfastness has been hard to detect publicly. The assaults of NAFTA's enemies—Ross Perot, Patrick Buchanan, organized labor, some environmentalists, House Democratic Whip David Bonior—went unchallenged until Clinton engaged the issue in September. As a result, the treaty's chances for approval by a majority in both houses of Congress suffered. Clinton didn't give NAFTA much of a boost in the first place by his lukewarm endorsement late in the presidential race. And as president, he's rarely mentioned it. Interviewed in July on CNN by Larry King, Clinton neglected to cite NAFTA when outlining his agenda for the fall. Vice President Al Gore, at a breakfast with several dozen reporters, also omitted NAFTA as a priority.

The White House has a lame excuse for its reticence. "The side agreements weren't done," says Stephanopoulos. By talking up NAFTA, "you'd have undercut our negotiators," claims Special Trade Representative Mickey Kantor. This is nonsense. Clinton could have touted NAFTA in principle, countered the arguments of Perot and company and added that he wouldn't go ahead with the treaty without strong side agreements. Clinton chose not to do this for two reasons. First, he and his aides were obsessed with getting the budget passed. When David Gergen joined the White House staff in late May, he was surprised to find other issues blotted out. "It wasn't just NAFTA," he says. "It was health care too. All the health care meetings stopped." The second reason was Clinton's reluctance to clash with Democratic interest groups, labor especially, any sooner than necessary. Why jump the gun?

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Warnings of trouble for NAFTA went unheeded. When Mack McLarty, the White House chief of staff, visited House Republicans in February, Representative Jim Kolbe of Arizona pleaded for fast action. "We can't lose time on NAFTA," he said. McLarty said he understood the urgency. But little happened. It took months to formulate a negotiating position on the side agreements. "They left the playing field to the other side," says Kolbe. By summer, members of Congress were being pummeled by NAFTA foes. Democrat Representative Charles Stenholm of Texas, who is pro-NAFTA, encountered so much flak at town hall meetings in August, he began pre-empting NAFTA opponents by polling the crowd. The usual tally was one-third in favor, one quarter against, the rest eager for more information. Before the August recess, Republican Whip Newt Gingrich pegged solid GOP House support for NAFTA at 120 (out of 175). After the recess, his estimate dropped to 80. And those who still back the treaty are "sitting on their hands until they see the president out there campaigning for NAFTA," says Kolbe, the Republican point man on the treaty. Their doubts linger out of fear Clinton's anti-NAFTA advisers—Hillary Clinton is no NAFTA fan—will rein him in.

Clinton is now out there. His kickoff event at the White House on September 14 was dazzling. He extemporized passionately on NAFTA, talking so long that chairs had to be placed on the stage so former Presidents Bush, Ford and Carter, all pro-NAFTA, wouldn't grow tired while standing. "I say this to you," Clinton declared. "Are we going to compete and win, or are we going to withdraw? Are we going to face the future with confidence that we can create tomorrow's jobs, or are we going to try against all the evidence of the last twenty years to hold on to yesterday's.... If we walk away from this, we have no right to say to other countries in the world, you're not fulfilling your world leadership, you're not being fair [on trade] with us. This is an opportunity to provide an impetus to freedom and democracy in Latin America and create new jobs for America as well. It's a good deal and we ought to take it." Kolbe was thrilled. "It was everything we needed and hoped for and could have expected," he said. "Now Republicans are going to be watching to see if he sustains it."

The White House initially planned for Clinton to appear at a factory to play up the job creation potential of NAFTA ("a million jobs in the first five years," according to Clinton). But as the Israeli-Palestinian talks neared success, the president decided to capitalize on the presence of Bush and Carter in Washington for the Middle East peace signing. Ford agreed to put off a trip to Greece. Former Presidents Nixon and Reagan were invited but declined. Nixon prefers solo appearances, not mass events. When he joined Ford and Carter at Anwar Sadat's funeral in 1981, it prompted one of Bob Dole's greatest barbs. Dole looked at a picture of Ford, Carter and Nixon together, and said: "See no evil, hear no evil, and evil." Reagan turned down the invitation because he doesn't come east for photo opportunities. Both Nixon and Reagan are pro-NAFTA, though, and Clinton wants to get them to separate NAFTA gatherings.

They can help. Clinton may need as many as 140 Republican votes in the House to win. (Senate approval is regarded as near-certain.) Daley says eighty to 100 Democrats (out of 258) are in the "targeted group." But Stephanopoulos, who knows the House well, doesn't expect many more than eighty Democrats to vote for NAFTA. Majority Leader Richard Gephardt hasn't formally declared against the treaty, but the White House assumes he's lost. So there won't be any concessions to him in the treaty's implementing legislation. "We aren't going to make an effort to get anybody who'll lose us votes," says Daley. "This is about addition, not subtraction." The guess at the White House is that appeasing Gephardt would lose four times more votes than it would gain. Rather than sweeten the pot for Gephardt and other Democrats, Republicans want Clinton to lean on them. "If the president can twist 248 Democratic arms to vote for taxes, he ought to be able to twist a handful of arms for jobs through exports," says Kolbe.

The stakes are high. And Clinton raised them higher by his emotional pitch for NAFTA. Carter raised them still higher by trashing Perot ("a demagogue who has unlimited financial resources"). Republicans also have a stake in thwarting Perot. If NAFTA fails despite the backing of the entire Republican hierarchy, Perot will have a claim on leadership of the GOP. And Buchanan will have better grounds for arguing he's the true leader of the conservative movement. •

The non-rescue of Habeas Corpus.

BAD NOOSE

By Jeffrey Rosen

The trial of Cornelius Singleton, who was executed in Alabama last November for killing a nun in a cemetery by smothering her with rocks, was hardly a model of due process. After begging to be taken off the case, the court-appointed lawyer refused to meet with his client, failed to object when the prosecutor struck all blacks from the jury pool and neglected to tell the jury that Singleton was mentally retarded. He then forged Sin-

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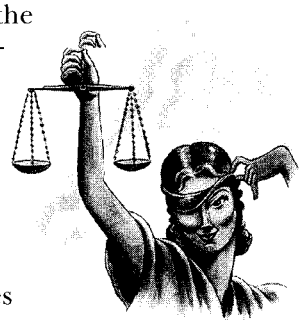
gleton's name on a petition for habeas corpus; he was later disbarred. Singleton would not have been eligible for the death penalty if he had been properly defended; but six Supreme Court justices agreed last year that he should be executed anyway because of a 1991 decision that prohibits federal courts from reviewing more than one habeas corpus petition from each prisoner unless there is serious new evidence of actual innocence. "It was clear to everyone that the guy got screwed," said a conservative clerk. "What allowed all of us to sleep soundly that night was the knowledge that he was basically guilty."

The Singleton case epitomizes the law-and-order culture of the Rehnquist Court, where liberal justices object that constitutional rights are being violated with impunity and conservative justices counter, according to the clerk: "He's a bad apple who's had his claims adjudicated up the wazoo; let's fry him." (A less visceral response is that endless delays threaten federalism.) Since the Civil War, the writ of habeas corpus has been an unambiguous guarantee that any prisoner convicted in state court can have the constitutionality of his conviction, or his sentence, reviewed in federal court. But over the past fifteen years, Chief Justice William Rehnquist has transformed habeas corpus into a thicket of obscure and time-consuming procedures that *prevent* federal judges from correcting constitutional errors unless they cast serious doubt on the defendant's guilt. Rehnquist's innovations, most of them spun out of thin air, represent his most radical vision: an abandonment of the ideal of a fair trial in favor of a cruder search for something near the truth. Recognizing the problem, Senator Joseph Biden set out to resurrect habeas corpus as part of the Omnibus Crime Bill this fall. But by splitting the difference between habeas supporters and opponents, Biden has failed to reverse much of Rehnquist's legacy.



The centerpiece of the Biden compromise is a high-stakes trade-off: one bite at the apple in exchange for better lawyers. A 1989 study by the American Bar Association found that underpaid, often wildly incompetent, court-appointed lawyers are responsible for the fact that federal courts now find constitutional errors in about 40 percent of the capital habeas cases they review. (See "Habeas Corpse," TNR, July 15 & 22, 1991.) Under the Biden proposal, prisoners will be limited to a single habeas petition—unless evidence of actual innocence emerges—and they will have to file it within six months. (The statute of limitations is unprecedented: since the seventeenth century, courts have said that the right of freedom from illegal restraint never lapses.) In return, states will have to provide defense lawyers at every stage: two at trial, one on appeal and one after conviction.

Last year, Senate Democrats called for the creation of independent boards in each state, which would assign lawyers to individual defendants. In response to pressure from state prosecutors, the Biden bill keeps the assignment power in the hands of elected state judges (who are themselves under heavy pressure to rack up executions); but it requires them to choose from lists of lawyers approved by the defense bar. The bill does little, however, about the underlying problem of inadequate funding. Few competent local lawyers are willing to take on capital defendants for $20 an hour, the going rate in death-belt states like Alabama. By encouraging courts to penalize states that fail to set reasonable rates, the Biden bill could be improved.

On the broader question of restoring access to the federal courts, the Biden bill fudges again. Rehnquist's ultimate goal has been to eviscerate habeas corpus by requiring federal courts to defer to state courts if their legal conclusions are "reasonable," rather than making an independent judgment about whether the conclusions are correct. Congress and the Supreme Court have repeatedly refused to enact Rehnquist's proposals. In a 1991 case, however, Clarence Thomas, Antonin Scalia and Rehnquist not only endorsed the relaxed standard of review; they denied that Congress and the Court had repudiated it. (Sandra Day O'Connor exposed their selective quotations from cases which, in fact, said the opposite of what they claimed.) Six justices have now rejected Rehnquist's proposal; the Biden bill prudently rejects it as well.

By manipulating another doctrine, however, Rehnquist has achieved covertly what he was unable to achieve openly. A 1989 case, *Teague* v. *Lane*, said that federal courts can't consider habeas corpus claims based on "new rules of law" that were not in effect at the time of conviction. By itself, this principle isn't crazy: if dramatic shifts in the law were routinely applied retroactively, federal courts might hesitate to announce new rules, for fear of upsetting the whole criminal justice system. In later cases, however, Rehnquist defined "new rules of law" in an absurdly broad way: he said that as long as the state court's misinterpretation of the Constitution wasn't patently unreasonable, federal courts can't correct it without creating a "new rule of law." This means that in every case where reasonable judges can disagree—which is almost every case—federal courts are powerless to correct constitutional errors. Instead of candidly overturning the Warren Court's expansion of constitutional rights, in short, Rehnquist has surreptitiously made the rights unenforceable.

Senate Democrats agreed last year to resurrect the traditional definition of new rules of law: "clear breaks in existing precedent." Cowed by the opposition of the prosecutors, however, the Biden negotiators came up with a compromise: they would define a new rule tautologically, as "a rule that changes the constitutional standards." Both sides accepted the obfuscation

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because no one is sure exactly what it means, or whether the Court will interpret it more restrictively than the current law. But it would be hard to blame the conservative justices for concluding that Congress is not really serious about resurrecting habeas corpus, as long as it refuses to make its intentions clear.

Last April, Rehnquist delivered a final blow. For decades, the Court has said that a defendant whose constitutional rights are violated is entitled to relief unless the state proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the error was "harmless," that it had no effect on the outcome of the trial. In the 5-4 *Brecht* case, however, Rehnquist announced that federal courts now have to shrug off constitutional violations unless the defendant can prove that the errors "had a substantial and injurious effect" on the jury's verdict. This is basically impossible to prove, which means that many constitutional rights are now impossible to enforce. The Biden bill, in a half-hearted response, says that the state, rather than the defendant, has the burden of proof; but it fails to require that all constitutional errors that are *not* harmless must be corrected.

Many principled conservatives support capital punishment and forthrightly oppose the Warren Court, but recognize the critical importance of habeas corpus in protecting the constitutional rights that remain. By reducing habeas corpus to a thin promise that innocent people will not be executed, by contrast, the Rehnquist Court has obscured its traditional purpose, which is to ensure that innocent and guilty people are not tried or sentenced in ways that violate the Constitution. The Biden compromise may be the best that can be expected from the current Congress; and it may represent a slight improvement over the status quo. But liberals will no longer be able to accuse the Court of judicial activism once Congress has endorsed so much of what Rehnquist created. •

The Shock of Recognition I.

PEACE NOT

By Ruth Wisse

On the day it was announced that an agreement would be signed between Israel and the PLO, Israeli television featured a debate among politicians, intellectuals, journalists, Jews and Arabs. The most buoyant voice at the start of the show was that of the writer Amos Oz, a longstanding supporter of Peace Now, who hailed the historic birth of Palestinian Zionism and the mutual recognition of two equal nations. "From a Zionist perspective," Oz had written in that morning's edition of *Yediot Akhronot*, "people may look back on 1993 as the end of our 100 years of solitude in the Land of Israel. Now it may be time... to consolidate Israel as a safe, stable, legitimate home for the Jewish people and its Arab citizens." But by the time the program ended several hours later, Oz was insisting: "*Ani lo optimi!*—I am not optimistic"; only because the agreement was so "cautious" was he prepared to give it his support. Yet this, too, was self-contradictory, since no one in Israel had seen the agreement, and the portions published in that morning's paper had been leaked to it through Arab sources.

Although few Israelis were prepared to greet the prospect of a new Palestinian state with the fervor of the intellectual elite, most people were caught in a similar tangle of hopes and fears. It is hard for Americans, even those who understand Israel best, to know the exhaustion caused by permanent siege. Israelis are worn out by the swell of military cemeteries, the nerve-racking pressure of Arab enmity that surrounds them and that explodes periodically from within the country. They have remained vigilant because they had no alternative for their national survival.

Thus, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was elected last year on a platform of uncompromising national strength. He promised there would be no negotiations with the PLO, no Palestinian state, no concessions on the Golan Heights. He campaigned as the 1967 liberator of Jerusalem, who had unified the Israeli capital for all time. So frightened was the Labor party of the dovish shadow cast by Shimon Peres that he was kept under wraps throughout the election campaign. Yet once in Washington, when Rabin, under Peres' influence, reneged on each of his promises, he unleashed an avalanche of hope. Far from punishing Rabin for betraying its democratic trust, Israel was swept up by the very ideas it had so recently rejected; the less it knew about the guarantees for Jewish security, the greater seemed to be the expectancy of peace.

Conversations with Israelis in Jerusalem the first week of September were like a dizzying ride on a roller coaster. A staunch conservative declared himself so tired of his own skepticism that "if elections were called on territorial compromise I wouldn't know how to vote." Contrarily, an advocate of concessions suddenly realized how much land may be lost. "We'll have the settlers [in Judaea and Samaria] to thank after all," sighed a voter for the left-of-labor Meretz party. "We should have built more roads to connect their settlements." A lifelong Leftist reported "in despair" the political conversation he'd had that morning with his Arab contractor, who surprised him by rejecting the proposed agreement out of hand. In fact, it was the testimony of another such Arab that had changed the mood of the television show featuring Amos Oz: these unofficial Palestinian Arab spokesmen wanted Jerusalem now. But since when had Arab politics been democratic? If Arafat was doing a turnabout, might not the Palestinian Arab rank and file take his cue?

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Because Israel's gamble on Yasir Arafat flies in the face of rational expectation and yesterday's political consensus, the debate over its merits seemed to pit faith against reason. But faith and reason do not agree on which is which. The pragmatist points out that though Israel can only give up land in the hope that territorial concession will be rewarded by peace on the part of the Arabs, there is no basis for such hope: If the Arabs went to war against Israel in 1967 when all the disputed territories were in their hands, what's to keep them from repeating the process? If the Palestinian Arabs were cheering Saddam Hussein two years ago as the SCUDS fell around Tel Aviv, how can you expect them to become docile neighbors? Yasir Arafat is, after Saddam Hussein, the bloodiest political leader in the Middle East. By giving him an official "police" force and making him head of a second Palestinian state, how can one reasonably expect to lower the risk of terrorism?

Yet the supporter of territorial concessions also speaks in the voice of reason: a small democratic people cannot keep control in perpetuity over an expanding, restive, subject population. The very intransigence of the Arabs requires giving them a territory they can control. Arafat can impose order on Arabs to a degree that is impossible for Jews. One professor who holds these views explained to me that Israelis are too discouraged to maintain full military strength much longer: "As a pragmatist, I tell you the concessions are our only hope." This brand of pragmatism grants the Arabs their victory, and thinks that by cutting its losses Israel will be rewarded with at least a decent interval of respite. Some of what passes for hopefulness is ventriloquized despair.

The political lineup is likewise riddled with contradictions. Many "doves" are prepared to place Arafat in charge of Gaza and the disputed territories so that he, rather than they, should slaughter his fellow Arabs if necessary. Their faith in Arab "Zionism" corresponds to their disappointment in Jewish Zionism, which they blame for not having been able to turn Jews into an accepted people. Many so-called "zealots," on the other hand, manifesting those very qualities of self-reliance and moral earnestness that characterized the early Zionist pioneers, are reluctant to place their fate back into the safekeeping of Gentiles. They protest that in courting Arafat as a friend, their prime minister is treating his countrymen as the enemy.

In normal times, Israel is described as a land of generals and prime ministers, where, given the chance, every citizen could be chief strategist. These are not normal times. Through its open-ended agreement with Arafat, the government has stirred messianic longing within a population starved for peace. Government strategists believe that in quickly laying the foundation for a new Palestinian Arab state they have retroactively validated the Jewish state, and created the basis of a working political partnership. But until yesterday, only a tiny percentage of Israelis accepted this premise, and since these are the people who will have to hand over their field of dreams to Arafat's army, they should not be swept into a process that will be irreversible.

Before the euphoria fades, Rabin would do well to bring the democratic process back to his people, to let the country vote on the agreements that will bind them. If the peace plan can withstand the scrutiny of the Israeli electorate, then people will feel themselves bound to enforce it, even when their hearts ache and their nerves jangle. And unless the plan can withstand the scrutiny of the people, the current euphoria will quickly crumble into depression and anger. Precisely because hopes for peace are running so high, it is wise to deflate them. A sober population will be required when it comes home to the people that Israel has suffered what any other country would recognize as defeat. Prime Minister Rabin would do a great service to Israel, and in the long run to his party, if he shows the same trust in his electorate that he is prepared to place in the PLO.

RUTH WISSE is professor of Yiddish literature at Harvard University.

The Shock of Recognition II.

ARAFAT'S BURDEN

By Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin

JERUSALEM & GAZA

The PLO has made peace with Israel. Now it must make peace with the Palestinians. For Yasir Arafat decided to recognize Israel literally overnight, without preparing supporters or constituents, and it will take years for the PLO and Palestinians to adjust to this new world.

During its thirty years of struggle, the PLO tried a wide variety of strategies. It waited for Arab states to destroy Israel in battle, initiated its own guerrilla warfare, created waves of terrorist attacks, became a Soviet client, promoted a civilian uprising in the occupied territories, tried to persuade the United States to pressure Israel into surrender and cheered on Iraq's drive for conquest. At last, having exhausted every other alternative, Arafat chose the only route that could bring success and Palestinian liberation: making peace with Israel directly.

Many of the obstacles that inhibited him from taking this last step earlier, however, are returning to haunt the PLO leader. He faces no less than four daunting, critical tasks: to hold together the PLO; to gain popular support for his plan; to build a new relationship with Arab states; and to negotiate an extremely complex peace accord with

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Israel involving a half-dozen seemingly insoluble, highly emotional issues.

While Israel is taking serious risks, the PLO faces the far greater problem of transforming itself from revolutionary movement to ruling authority. Arafat has already passed the ideological test, but this new stage—which involves more than autonomy but less than sovereignty—will measure his competence in sober statesmanship, where he has shown only limited skill.

Arafat's first ordeal is to keep the PLO united around his program. He has committed himself not only to renounce terrorism but also to "assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to ensure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators." He has also abandoned the ideological basis of the PLO's consensus by declaring "inoperable and no longer valid" those parts of the Palestinian Charter that "deny Israel's right to exist."

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The PLO was always a loose umbrella organization. It had little or no control over member groups, which often rejected, ignored or forced the abrogation of Arafat's decisions. Their sponsorship by radical Arab regimes made them more immune to Arafat's authority. Hatim Abu Ghazala, a leading Gaza activist, once complained that the Palestinians were "the only nation in the world that has to govern itself by consensus and not majority rule." In this context, Arafat's obsession with maintaining the PLO's unity repeatedly damaged Palestinian interests.

Indeed, five of the PLO's eight member groups—most importantly the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—oppose Arafat's initiative. "We are the real PLO," a PFLP activist told a West Bank protest meeting. This opposition may well walk out of the PLO, try to work with Arafat's Islamic fundamentalist foes and gain support from such radical states as Iran, Iraq, Libya and possibly Syria.

Even Arafat's own Fatah group was not immune from bitter dissent. Three of eight pro-Fatah independent members on the PLO Executive Committee—Mahmud Darwish, Shafiq al-Hut and Abdallah Hourani—rejected his policy, as did Faruq Qaddumi, the most popular Fatah leader after Arafat himself. Fatah's military commanders in Lebanon are also angry and may oppose the PLO chairman.

Nonetheless, Arafat does control Fatah—a group far larger than its radical rivals within the organization—and can expect the backing of 80 percent to 85 percent of the PLO's officials and troops. His standing as a symbol of Palestinian nationalism, along with the patronage and repression he can disburse, are also major assets. In short, if Arafat applies the necessary willpower and skill, he can deliver the great majority of the PLO for a peaceful settlement with Israel.

Bringing along the Palestinians themselves is another, perhaps even more difficult, challenge. About two-thirds of those living in the West Bank and Gaza accept the Israel-PLO accords. Arafat's problem, then, is not so much winning a big majority but imposing order on a large, violent minority. There are two basic sources of opposition here. Many Palestinians still want to destroy Israel and create an Arab state from the Jordan river to the sea. Zuhayr al-Rayyes, a founder of the PLO and an author of its Charter, who lives in Gaza, declares, "I am not ready to give up any part of Palestine." Arafat's radical foes in the PLO and the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas, especially strong in Gaza, echo this sentiment.

The other, even more common, concern of rank-and-file Palestinians might be called the fear of freezing. They worry that the agreement may merely produce limited self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza under permanent Israeli occupation. Continued progress, along with the social forces for unanimity and accepting legitimized ruling authority so powerful in Arab culture, can persuade many of these people to support Arafat.

Yet differences among Palestinians also have a material basis. The plan's main beneficiaries will be the majority in the West Bank and the minority of Gazans who are indigenous residents of these places. Almost all the middle class in the territories come from this group, which also staffed the Palestinian negotiating team. In general, such people—like Faysal al-Husseini, their most important local leader—applaud Arafat's strategy.

Less enthusiastic, however, are refugees in the occupied territories who live in camps and tend to be poorer and more militant. This group has supplied the most active intifada activists and most militant Islamic fundamentalists. Coming from places now located in Israel, these 1948 refugees have been first and foremost interested in regaining their old homes and thus in destroying the Jewish state. Aside from this radical objective, they also fear being left trapped in their current circumstances.

Hamdi Farraj, born in Dahaysha camp near Bethlehem to a family originally from a village in what is now central Israel, fears that he and his neighbors "are the losers in this agreement." They think Israel will stop

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implementation of the accord and that Arafat is forgetting them. "Even the PLO says that the deal doesn't give the refugees anything.... We know we will stay in camps."

A potentially even bigger gap divides the people living in the West Bank and Gaza from the 1948 refugees—roughly half of all Palestinians—living abroad, in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere. Easing or even ending the occupation does not benefit them directly. They will not be able to return to their original homes in a Palestine built on Israel's ruins, and they may doubt their chance even to be resettled in the West Bank. Those who conclude that they will be permanently displaced will see Arafat as a traitor and turn to dissident PLO groups.

"No one is in a position to say what the majority of the Palestinians wants," says the West Bank journalist Jamil Hamad. "There will be a power struggle." Although Hamas promises it will not use violence against fellow Palestinians, this pledge may not hold, especially since the PLO has pledged to crack down on those engaged in the hitherto applauded practice of killing Israelis. Bassam Abu Sharif, Arafat's most outspoken aide, threatens that the PLO will "crush the heads" of Hamas if it attacks Arafat's supporters.

A quieter, more peaceful contest may pit returning PLO officials against local people who, while loyal to Arafat, also want their share of authority. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin paid tribute to these "inside" leaders' loyalty to Arafat as a factor in his decision to recognize the PLO directly, since there was no other way to reach an agreement.

But Arafat distrusts such people as Faysal al-Husseini as potential competitors. Perhaps, finally, Arafat has made concessions to Israel in order to avoid a prolonged autonomy period under local Palestinian supervision or a diplomatic strategy dependent on this group of local leaders. Arafat has always spoken highly of the "Algerian model," where a government and army in exile returned to rule on independence, excluding from power the internal leaders who had actually fought the French and later killed, imprisoned or exiled many of them. In Namibia, where a parallel process took place, the new rulers, after thirty years abroad, hardly knew the country.

Still, Israel's primary interest is not that Palestinian self-rule is democratic, but that it is stable, keeps its commitments and blocks anti-Israel terrorism. Rabin, like Arafat, wants the PLO to defeat its internal adversaries in the elections planned for next year.

Israel and the PLO also suddenly have some parallel interests in regard to the regional situation. The PLO's isolation in the Arab world and its impending bankruptcy were equally major factors pushing Arafat toward making peace. In this new political stage, he must rebuild relations with Arab regimes from a very feeble position. The PLO's dependence on Saudi money, Egyptian diplomatic support and Jordanian cooperation risks subordination to them. The projected but ill-defined plan to create a Jordan-Palestine confederation will be hard to negotiate. The two potential partners have ample cause for mutual mistrust, with Jordan determined to curtail any PLO influence over the majority of Jordanian citizens who are also Palestinians. King Hussein has a common interest with Israel to keep any Palestinian entity stable, peaceful and weak.

Arafat's regional enemies—Iraq, Iran, Libya and Lebanese Islamic fundamentalists—are now the same as those of the United States and Israel. They are backing his rivals and would like to see him eliminated, but they can do relatively little, for they are far away, isolated and can no longer turn to a Soviet Union for support. Uncertainty over Syria's position, however, is a more serious matter. Damascus dominates Lebanon, sponsors anti-PLO Palestinian groups and is a major sponsor of terrorism. To cite one example, a Syrian-sponsored terror campaign in 1985-86 assassinated a PLO Executive Committee member and helped dissuade Jordan's King Hussein from negotiating with Israel. Ahmad Jibril, a dissident Palestinian terrorist who has threatened to kill Arafat, is a longtime Syrian client.

Syrian opposition to Arafat is motivated by two factors. First, Damascus does not want to lose all hope of controlling the Palestinians. Second, Syrian President Hafez el-Assad worries that his effort to regain the Golan Heights will be pushed aside by the Israel-PLO agreement. Rabin seems in no hurry to conclude another controversial deal. Hence, even if Syria wants to move quickly toward its own peace with Israel—a point that cannot be taken for granted—it will try to gain leverage by showing an ability to sabotage a separate deal.

Running such a gauntlet of radical nationalists, revolutionary Islamic fundamentalists, mistrustful constituents and antagonistic dictators makes Arafat's situation less than ideal. Yet he has been in far worse situations. At the very start of the process, Arafat and his colleagues are at a low point. Their power and popularity can only increase as they return to the territories, dispense money and patronage, bring back other deportees, build a police force to protect themselves and punish adversaries, secure the Israeli army's withdrawal from populated areas and show they are making progress and improving the Palestinians' lives.

Many of Arafat's followers hope that this process will build a momentum of its own and inevitably produce a broad base of support. Radwan Abu Ayyash, one of the few West Bank mainstream leaders from a refugee background, claims, "People have to taste the fruits of peace to be convinced that it is positive and genuine." Once the PLO "gets busy building the homeland and changing the old stereotypes and psychology, they will feel the difference and see that it is not just talks and slogans." He predicts that the radical demonstrations will vanish when people discover the benefits of dialogue and understand that the current agreement "is the first step toward a comprehensive peace settlement."

But what will that comprehensive solution look like? With Arafat needing every bit of popularity and power to galvanize popular support, he will constantly reinter-

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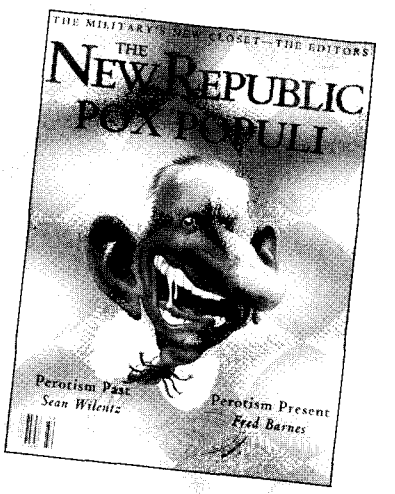

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pret agreements with Israel on terms more likely to please his followers, then disappoint them when he cannot deliver. Already, he is announcing that the PLO will soon obtain a Palestinian state, with its capital in east Jerusalem and jurisdiction over all the West Bank and Gaza.

Yet the reality, probably for at least five years, will be an Israeli security presence, constraints on Palestinian authority, the continued existence of Jewish settlements and other features not so congenial to Arafat's constituents. Israel will bargain toughly over east Jerusalem's future and demand changes in the old borders. The PLO may be conducting another set of difficult talks with Jordan over their future relationship in a confederation. Even coping with the economic mess of overcrowded Gaza is alone a Herculean task.

The most promising element for a successful outcome providing security for Israel and a better life for Palestinians is the completely new shape of the PLO's interests. Hani al-Hasan, a veteran pro-Arafat PLO leader, argued that the Palestinians will be far too weak to pose any "military threat to Israel's security and existence." The Palestinian authority would have a strong interest in stopping terrorists since "violence of any kind would provoke an Israeli response which would threaten the very existence" of any Palestinian state and the fruit of forty years of struggle. Its leaders "would have every conceivable incentive to keep the peace." If Israel had to take reprisals, the international community would support it. And Israeli and Palestinian leaders, he suggested, might join forces to fight terrorism targeting them both.

While the PLO itself employed terrorism and did not clearly accept Israel's existence, such claims remained mere abstractions. Now everything has changed. The PLO has no Soviet Union or radical Arab states to back it: the former does not exist; the latter have become its sworn enemies. The policy of the United States, the world's sole superpower and victor over Iraq, strongly supports Israel. Arafat still needs to act moderately in order to obtain Israel's help and cooperation; even if Rabin cannot reverse the process he can certainly halt it. The same radical Palestinian nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists who want to continue the war to destroy Israel are also fighting Arafat.

The PLO faces a difficult situation, but this danger, at least, promises to produce a real solution rather than the sterile revolutionary posturing which historically characterized the organization. "This is the historical chance," Arafat said at the start of this era. "If we lose it, we are criminals." Israel has recognized the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people. Now the PLO must prove it.

BARRY RUBIN teaches at Tel Aviv University. His history of the PLO, *Revolution Until Victory?* will be published in February by Harvard University Press. JUDITH COLP RUBIN is a journalist.

The Shock of Recognition III.

AFTER EUPHORIA

By Martin Peretz

"I feel no gaiety in me," said David Ben Gurion to a friend, "only deep anxiety.... I [am] like a mourner at the feast." He was speaking on May 14, 1948, having just read out to a previously elected provisional parliament the proclamation of "the Jewish state in Palestine to be called Israel." Of course, he was exaggerating; he must have felt gaiety. But while people cheered in the streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Ben Gurion was contemplating the heartbreaks that these same men and women, and those who would follow, were still to experience. Yes, Zionism had at long last achieved the political goal of statehood. Yet this achievement did not assure what Theodor Herzl—whose portrait, at once patriarch and prophet, hung behind Ben Gurion as he spoke—had envisioned as its great metaphoric human consequence: that Jews could, at long last, expect to "die peacefully in their own beds." In fact, many would die on the battlefields for restored Zion, and others, many others, would be killed by terror on the street, in the field, at school.

Yitzhak Rabin speaks in artless prose (though he did not speak artlessly at the signing ceremony), and he said last week that he had "butterflies in [his] stomach." It is easy to underestimate the gravity of his words. What they really tell us, though, is that this soldier-statesman also knows that the Herzlian vision is not about to be realized, at least not yet. Despite this, he and his government have decided to do all they can to meet core Palestinian grievances. What we are watching unfold is an initiative of the Israelis themselves. The initiative was not taken under pressure from the United States; the United States did not even know that negotiations had been going on for many months, in Oslo and elsewhere. It was as if both parties feared that American awareness of the talks would jinx them. As it happens, moreover, as Rashid Khalidi, an adviser to the Palestinian delegation at the Madrid-Washington talks, has written in the *The New York Times*, Israel was far ahead of the United States: "American drafts were less forthcoming to the Palestinians than the Israelis' drafts." The initiative also is not a response to feelers from the Palestinians; indeed, while the Israeli government has been making open and substantial concessions to the Palestinians (while deriding its ultranationalist opposition), PLO representatives continue to put out maximal demands, instructing their constituencies in the false expectation that there can

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be peace without compromise also on their part.

This is what many Arabs want to believe, including Edward Said, whom eager American admirers have been depicting for two decades as a paradigmatic Palestinian moderate. But the new line pursued by the PLO leadership does not satisfy him. So he has now denounced "Arafat's Deal" in *The Nation*, a common last-ditch venue for sundry cruel illusions. On the BBC, he called it a "filthy peace." In his eyes the agreement is simply an Israeli trick, another manifestation of Israel's shrewdness and its strength. But if this is Zionist triumphalism, it is a triumphalism of a rather original kind, a triumphalism that wants to share itself.

What, after all, motivated the Labor government to warrant the many rogue contacts with the Palestinians, one of which would turn into the decisive high level talks that produced the agreement? It certainly was not desperation. The human costs to Israel were far less than the harvest of crime in some American cities. Other civilized and civil polities live with their own harshness and with the terror that provokes it for many decades without feeling the need to entice their enemies to the conference table. Take Britain in Northern Ireland, for example. This is not, in my eyes, a dereliction.

By other measures, too, Israel was not under special duress to transform its relationship with the Palestinians, especially since any change would carry with it unknown but hardly undiscernible perils. In any case, the world was gradually giving up the Palestinian cause. The hundred or so embassies-to-the-world of the PLO, bankrupt and "in decomposition," as Said put it, were fast "being closed, sold off, deliberately left to neglect." By 1990 the Palestinians had squandered their already eroded moral cachet as victims to their enthusiasm for Saddam Hussein's aggression against truly victimized Muslims, the Iraqi Shi'a, the Kurds, the Kuwaitis. Moreover, international authority, such as it is, was soon to set a new and appalling standard for itself about what was tolerable among neighbors when it sanctioned the Serbian genocide in Bosnia. The decades-long obsession with the offenses of Israel—some real, most imagined—simply could not survive the indifference to the vast death happening in the Balkans. When, in early summer, Israel launched a military operation against Hezbollah terror in southern Lebanon, the world seemed to understand its means and sympathize with its ends. This was a sign, certainly, not that Israel was home-free but that it would no longer be hectored and harassed by interlopers. The U.S. administration, uncertain in foreign affairs and tied down by domestic concerns, did not have the Middle East high on its agenda. With this unaccustomed political bounty came also a stunning revival of its economy, making Israel's growth rate perhaps second or third highest in the world.

The Washington event is a reproach to all those Americans (including American Jews) who argued that the only way to get Israel to make serious concessions to the Palestinians was to twist its arms, hold its interests hostage, deny it critical intelligence information, vote against it in the U.N., call it names, threaten desertion, stir up anti-Semitic stereotypes. No one was more committed to these brute tactics than President Bush and his secretary of state, and they did not hesitate to use even the ugliest of these stratagems. James Baker has just written a column for the *Los Angeles Times* congratulating himself and his boss for "creating the atmosphere" out of which the agreement emerged. Nothing could be further from the truth. The plot did not work with the Likud government; and it also did not work with Labor, although by the time Rabin came to power he knew that Bush-Baker's days were numbered. Indeed, to the extent that the United States played a role, however peripheral, in the present developments, it was through the Clinton-Gore administration's open friendship for Israel and more than tacit support for its security requirements. The Israelis did not fear that, enmeshed in a negotiation, they would suddenly be faced with an ally publicly pushing their adversary's case. This also had a tonic effect on the Palestinians. With their legions in disarray and the Clinton team unsympathetic, the Palestinians finally had to utter the words without which they could get nothing from Jerusalem. In that sense, the United States had the most influence with the salient Arabs when it was most bound up with Israel.

There is not another case in modern history—and perhaps not in all of history—in which a nation so strategically well-positioned as Israel entered a negotiation fated to end in its forfeiting territory to its nemesis. How common is it that a country which wins several wars of self-defense is prepared to hand over (and has already handed over) a goodly portion of its conquests to people who are and always have been at best ... well, hostile? Say what the anchorman will about "the lost soul of Israel," the body-politic of Israel is rare in the annals. The Israelis, as Fouad Ajami put it, are "conquerors with scruples ... occupiers with a bad conscience." These scruples and this bad conscience are part of the glory of Zionism, or at least of one strain of Zionism, and this is the strain from which Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres come. Peres with unrelenting passion.

One might say, of course, that these Zionists acted as they did because they valued something else more than territory, more even than the protection territory provides. They wanted recognition of their legitimacy. But, then, how many peoples care that their unfriendly neighbors think them (and their presence in the region) legitimate? This is, perhaps, a weakness of the Jews, worrying far too much whether the others acknowledge their peoplehood. This is, after all, the nation that first gave meaning in history to the very idea of peoplehood. But more than wanting acceptance, such Zionists do not want their children to be in the position of having to beat up on other people's children. In this world, actually, that is a rather delicate sen-

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sibility. The Zionist right says it is too delicate a sensibility, oblivious to the mean norms of the Middle East. Maybe they are right. The Arabs, and the Palestinian Arabs in particular, should not confuse this delicacy with weakness.

On the day the agreement was first reported in the newspapers, my colleague Michael Walzer and I spoke on the phone. He said, "Marty, I assure you that I am trying to be skeptical." And I responded, "Michael, I assure you that I am trying to be enthusiastic." We are all (or almost all) of us now caught up in the symbolism of the moment. The White House signing was not, however, akin to the formal confirmation of the Camp David proceedings. Camp David was a treaty of peace; this is an agreement only on quite vague principles. The terms of the agreement don't even specify what exactly is meant by Jericho. At the very best, then, we are at the beginning of a long and, I am afraid, bitter wrangle.

Some critics of Israel lament the fact that Jerusalem didn't open the door to the PLO earlier. How much suffering might have been averted, they ask. But until recent months, Yasir Arafat's PLO was still mesmerized by its own delusionary rhetoric. That rhetoric bound the Palestinians to a solution whose compromises came only from Israel, with no reciprocal concessions at all. The government of Israel clearly is willing to turn dominion over Palestinian lives and over (almost all) the lands on which they live to the Palestinians themselves. This recognition of Palestinian turf, Palestinian interests, Palestinian politics constitutes enormous Israeli concessions. These have, however, to be matched, not in scope but in meaning. And they must take account of Israel's ongoing need to defend itself: we are not entering the messianic age. In any case, it is not only the Palestinians who were at war with Israel. And since they are not responsible for what other Arabs may do, they also cannot guarantee that, for example, Iraq's tanks will not one day (Jordan being a wil o' the wisp) stand on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, embarked on a crusade against Israel. Only Israel can be expected to interdict such an assault and turn it back, which is to say that Israel needs to be poised for the foreseeable future on the western bank of the river. This is only one reason why the Palestinians will also have to give "land for peace." If the Palestinians don't fathom this, if every difference between Israel and the PLO becomes an excuse for the kind of violent agitation at which young Palestinians have become so adept, if Jews remain targets of terror (as they were even on the eve of the Rabin-Arafat encounter), the process would unravel, and understandably so.

Still, I am not like a mourner at the feast. I feel, if not exactly gaiety, some exhilarated sense of the possibilities of the moment. But I also know that Jews have often been betrayed both by their own hopes and by their well-wishers. This is the Middle East, you have to remember, and pessimists have been right here more often than they were wrong. Ben Gurion's anxiety still shakes my bones. •

The Shock of Recognition IV.

On the Road

By Michael Walzer

"These are historic times," an Israeli friend told me on the phone from Jerusalem, "remember every minute." I am trying to do that, though events move too fast, and the fastest moves are hidden from view. Even now, rumors persist of secret agreements beyond the ones signed this week in Washington. Necessarily, opposition to the peace process takes more public forms, so I will begin with that, though the opposition hasn't yet been memorable (the arguments are weak, the demonstrations, thankfully, small).

Opponents on both sides sound remarkably alike, not only Jewish religious nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists, who speak in exactly the same strident tones (do they ever listen to one another?), but also secular Israeli rightists and Palestinian leftists, who say exactly the same thing: that the agreement is undemocratic. Call this the Khadummi-Netanyahu argument; it is obviously not focused on procedural matters but intended to challenge the legitimacy of everything so far accomplished and to set up the possibility of a radical reversal.

It seems likely that Yasir Arafat signed on at least in part to avoid the test of early elections (as provided for in the old autonomy proposal). Now there won't be an electoral campaign in the territories until after he has been given a chance to establish himself there. A story circulating in Israel has it that King Hussein was once asked by an official of the Carter administration whether he thought he could win an election on the West Bank. "If I run the election," he replied, "I will win the election." The last Algerian elections, run by a secular government, won by an Islamic party, suggest that Hussein's response no longer states an obvious truth. Still, Arafat has improved his odds.

But has there also been a violation of democratic order within the PLO itself? Arafat has always been a consensus chairman, which is why he was unable in the past to opt decisively for peace. But it is hard to say that he was ever a democratic chairman, pursuing policies that had been deliberated and decided by a genuinely representative body. How was the relative strength of "radicals" and "moderates" in the PNC worked out? How was the strategy of terrorism adopted and reiterated? How was the Palestinian state-within-a-state in Lebanon organized? How was the PLO's foreign policy—its relations with the Soviet Union, say, or with the Saudis—con-

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ducted? How was its money collected and allocated? None of these questions has a democratic answer. Nor, I suppose, does the question, how was this first, tentative agreement with Israel reached? But can people complain about the answer to this last question who never complained about the answers to any of the others?

Arafat's democratic test will come, if it ever comes, later, when Palestinians in the territories, having had some early experience of peace and autonomy (and of PLO government), vote for political representatives. It is likely to be a relatively fair election, even if Arafat has been given a leg up. But I would anticipate the fierce resistance of today's democratic champions.

Rabin's democratic test will also come later, but he has already survived a whole series of tests, including the acid test of democratic politics—being voted out of office. A little over a year ago, he was returned to office with a slim but, so far, secure majority. Does he have a mandate for peace? What Israeli government hasn't? But it is the government and no one else that decides on the contours of the peace. This is how parliamentary democracy works: the government rules so long as it commands a majority in the Knesset, whatever the state of opinion in the country. (Remember Margaret Thatcher, with an electoral majority of 42 percent, often lower in the opinion polls, whose policies no one called undemocratic, though they were called many other things.) The country will get its chance at Rabin and the Labor Party in the next elections, when it has lived for some time with the consequences of their policies. I haven't yet heard a plausible argument for altering this simple constitutional structure. At such a critical time, it seems prudent to uphold the procedures that people are accustomed to—which means no referendum and no early elections (unless there are shifts in the Knesset). The peace process needs time.

That is not to say that the agreement should not be debated. Jews and Palestinians, in Israel and the territories, and the diaspora too, should be asking themselves the crucial question of a democratically vicarious politics: If I were Rabin, if I were Arafat, would I have signed this agreement? My own answer is: yes, indeed—though I would have signed, as Rabin said he was doing when he signed the letter of recognition (in a wonderfully uncharacteristic aside), with "butterflies in my stomach." This is a big agreement, with risks for both sides, each of which must now deal with the spoiled fruits of its previous intransigence: the settlements and their frightened and angry inhabitants; the masked young men, suddenly useless and dangerous.

There is no guarantee of success. Right now, it is radically unclear how the agreement will be enforced against a probably violent opposition. Detailed security arrangements can only be negotiated later, so Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told Warren Christopher, quoting Churchill: you can't cross an abyss in two steps. Another quote comes to mind, from Napoleon: "*On s'engage et puis, on voit.*" You commit yourself, and then you see. Both sides are committed now; so far, they have done well.

For the Palestinians, the agreement worked out in Oslo is Camp David minus—even though what they are getting in Gaza and Jericho is something more than autonomy. The extent of Jewish settlement in the territories since 1978 means that the redeployment of the Israeli Defense Forces will be far less significant than it would have been then. If the army is to protect the settlers (even if many settlers leave), it will have to remain a considerable presence in the West Bank and a standing contradiction to the idea of self-rule.

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ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC BAKER FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Nonetheless, what the Palestinians have won is enormously important: the chance to build institutions; to create a governmental (rather than a movement) cadre—civil servants, judges and police; and to transform a divided and subjected people into something like a *yishuv* (the Hebrew word for the pre-state Jewish political community). It is not instant statehood, and some militants and ideologists will reject it. "The PLO," says Edward Said, "has transformed itself from a national liberation movement into a kind of small-town government." "The Israelis want us to run the occupation for them," one Palestinian leader in the territories told me last summer, speaking about "early empowerment," now part of the agreement. So the Jewish Agency in the 1930s and '40s took on many of the responsibilities of a small-town government, ran the occupation for the British (so far as Palestine's Jews were concerned)—and established itself as Britain's successor.

Other Palestinians have repeated Said's remark, lamenting the fall from liberation politics to local rule, and on a very small scale. But what did they expect to liberate? The Russian steppes? The great cities of central Europe? Australia? The Palestinian diaspora, like that of the Jews, is and will remain many-towned. Palestine will be, as Israel is, very small. And one day, if all goes well, the two together will drop off the front pages,

continued on page 26

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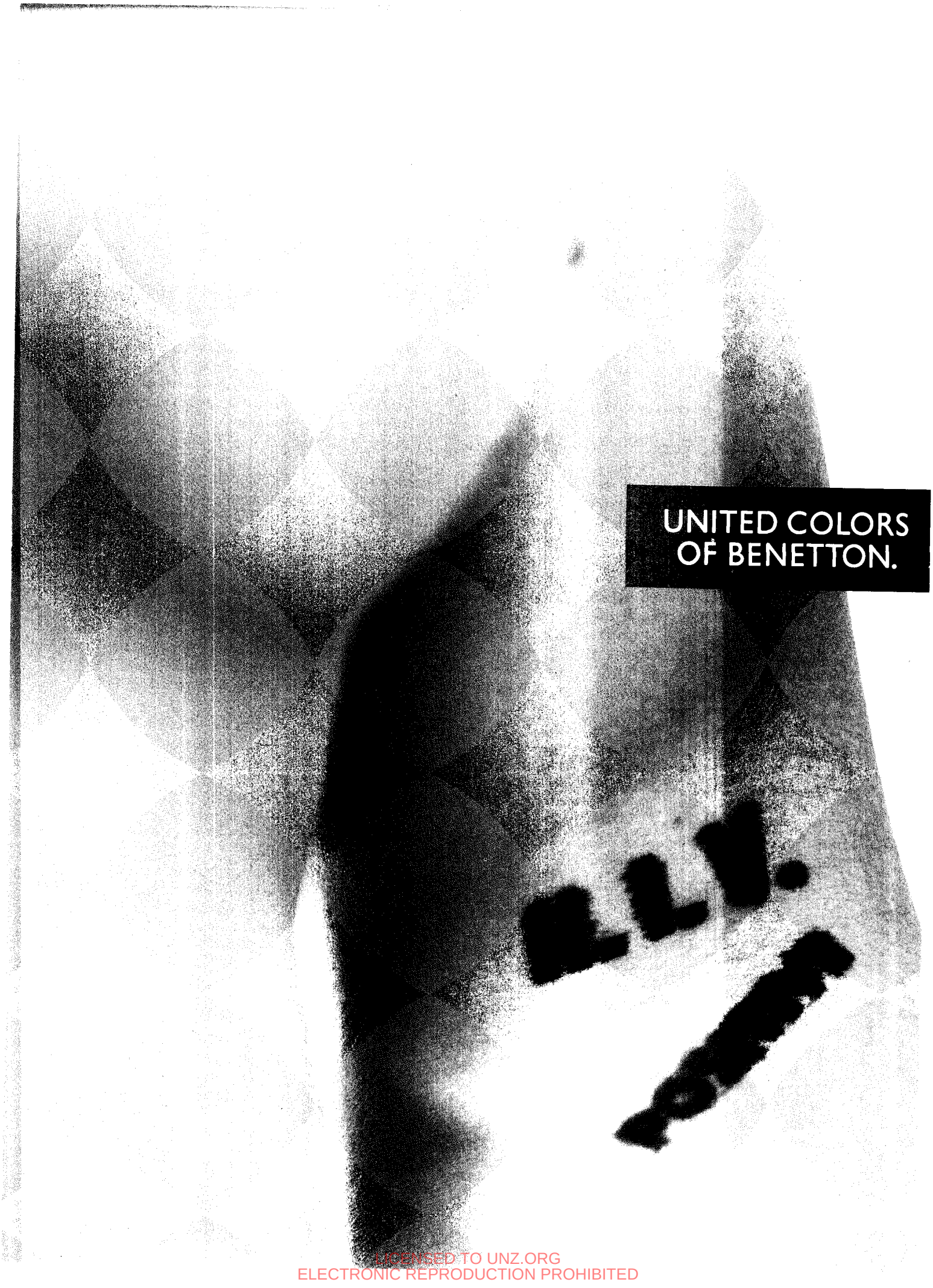

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and Palestine's leaders will have to learn what only the best of Israel's leaders know: that it is better to rule justly in one small town than to march in triumph through the cities of one's neighbors (which is, I suspect, the secret fantasy of these militants).

Whether the PLO actually will be the successor of the Israeli military government remains, despite the letters of mutual recognition, an open question. Arafat still has to establish his authority among his own people and, eventually, win an election. He will have to defeat his opponents, and probably not with arguments and ballots alone. The PLO needs to prove to the Palestinians, and also to the watching Israelis, that it is capable of using force against those who challenge the peace agreement with guns in hand. Friends have said to me that Arafat, as a gesture of intention, should finally take off his famous holster (as he did for the Washington ceremonies). A good idea, so long as someone else, committed to the peace process, puts it on.

Why should the Palestinians have to pass these "tests"? Other nationalist movements have come to power without anything like this required renunciation of violence and the long interregnum to make sure of its sincerity and effectiveness. (It probably would have been a good idea to impose something similar on the Serbs and Croats.) The answer has to do with Israeli democracy: Labor will have to win one more election to make the peace agreements work (since the timetable of the agreements extends beyond its term in office), and that means that Rabin must find support among a public that the PLO has worked hard to persuade of its deep hostility and deadly purposes. There are a lot of anxious people in Israel today: How will they jump? Perhaps this is a useful political maxim: no nationalist movement that has deliberately inspired fear in its future neighbors—practiced terrorism, threatened their very survival—should be awarded sovereignty until it has found some way of reassuring those same people.

The arrangements worked out in Oslo will lead in time, if the PLO passes the tests, to sovereignty and statehood—perhaps qualified by some federal link with Jordan. I am inclined to say that Israel should insist on the link. Since Jordan and Palestine are likely to come together sometime in the future anyway, it will make for greater stability to bring them together now. In any case, the Palestinians are on the road to independence. Israel's advantage on this journey, reflecting the current balance of power, is twofold: it is not a short road, and it is guarded by the IDF. Despite Benjamin Netanyahu's predictions of disaster, it is hard to imagine a serious threat to Israel's "existential security" (Rabin's phrase, explaining the PLO's weakness to the Cabinet last week) at any point along the way.

But the end of the road will bring a smaller Israel and a retreat of the settlers—and both of these are sure to involve major traumas. Rabin's argument has to be that peace will outlast the traumas and bring its own benefits. It is easy to list the benefits that peace is supposed to bring: not only massive foreign investment and economic growth, but a whole series of endings—an end to the burdens of occupation, an end to terrorism, an end to the Arab/Islamic crusade against the Jewish state. It will be tricky to give Israelis some sense of these as real possibilities before they are achieved realities (there may well be more terrorism rather than less in the short run). Perhaps the greatest gain of the first months will be the "loss" of the Gaza strip. Israeli parents won't have to send their children to patrol the desperate streets of Gaza's cities and camps.

There is another, more contested, advantage that the Oslo agreement offers to Israel—a new birth of liberal democracy. The years of occupation have forged a frightening alliance of right-wing nationalism and religious zealotry, an Israeli parallel to Islamic fundamentalism, which also, among the Palestinians, takes fiercely nationalist forms. In Israel, I think, this alliance has passed its peak; it failed to win ideological support among Oriental Jews and has little appeal to the new Russian immigrants. The Left's electoral victory in June '92 signaled the decline of zealotry. But its definitive replacement by another, better politics can only come now, in the very process of making the peace agreement work on the ground. The withdrawal from the West Bank will involve a religious renunciation, a crucial step toward a fully secular politics. A minority of religious Jews are ready for this renunciation, and their liberal version of Judaism can only be enhanced by the success of the peace process. Even more important, a decisive majority of secular Jews may now be won for an open and pluralist politics.

It is already a cliché to say that hard times lie ahead. So many difficult issues have been set aside for the sake of this agreement. So much reliance is being put, unrealistically, on the psychological "breakthrough" it represents. If, in fact, old stereotypes are called into question and Palestinians and Israelis begin to trust one another, the necessary short-term agreements on police powers and political jurisdictions and the long-term agreements on boundaries, sovereignty, Jerusalem and so on, will be much easier to enforce; I am not sure that they will be any easier to reach; I am not sure that they are reachable. But these hard questions now will be negotiated by two previously unimaginable partners, with a mutual interest in success. And, at long last, these are the right partners. Only Israel can admit the Palestinians to the world of nations; only the Palestinians (and probably only the PLO among the Palestinians) can give Israel legitimacy in the eyes of its Arab neighbors.

So this first step along the way should be celebrated. There is an old Jewish prayer for such occasions—when something is done for the first time or a memorable event is recognized—in which God is thanked for "giving us life, and sustaining us, and bringing us to this day." Note *this day*: we may not be so grateful for every day to come. In lieu of a secular version, I am saying that prayer now—a quiet *sh'hecheyanu.* •

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LETTING GO

By Leon Wieseltier

The difference between news and knowledge is a little like the difference between breathlessness and breath long held. The one excites you and then leaves you defenseless before the caprices of circumstance, the other arms you against disappointment and then abandons you to a world without release. Sometimes the contradiction is not particularly discomfiting, when things change gradually, easefully, "incrementally," as the ambassadors and the attorneys say; but there are times when news simply crashes into knowledge, when a sudden change collides with the instruction that you already have in your possession about the malleability of men and their cordiality to change.

That instruction, that sobering slap of the past, can be ancient. I have waited more than two decades to hear that the Israelis and the Palestinians have recognized each other, waited for the day to come when I would hear that I was not a fool to believe that the enmity between these peoples was not coldly eternal, but merely historical, and also that I was not a fool to believe that politics has the power to make history mere; but as I watched CNN and felt joy stir, I was tripped up by the recollection of something I learned many years ago, by the appearance in my memory of four words, the four most beautiful and most preposterous words in the history of the Jewish people. And I understood just how delicately and just how fiercely this great reconciliation must be defended.

From the television, there arose the late twentieth-century occasion for joy; but on the other side of the wall there sat a fragile Hebrew volume published in Palestine in 1945, in which there appeared the late twelfth-century text of Ephraim of Bonn, an important figure in medieval Hebrew liturgical poetry. Ephraim's text is a chronicle of the brutal Jewish experience of the Second Crusade. In 1146, he reports, there arose an incendiary anti-Semitic preacher, Radulf the Cistercian, who "set forth from France and traveled across the entire land of Germany ... [and] wherever he went, he spoke evil of all the Jews in the land ... and said: 'Avenge the Crucified One on his enemies that stand before you and then go to war against the Ishmaelites.'" Of the Jews of the Rhineland, Ephraim tells, "we heard and our hearts melted and our spirits failed us, because of the fury of the oppressor who was preparing to destroy us. And we cried out to God, saying: 'Alas, Lord God, not even fifty years have passed ... since we spilled our blood for the Sanctification of the Holy Name on the day of the great slaughter [in the First Crusade in 1096]. Will you forsake us forever, O Lord? Will you extend your anger from generation to generation?" And then there appear those four crushing words, the final words of the panicked prayer: *Pa'amayim lo takum tzarah.* "Disaster will not strike twice."

There is no question mark after those words. This was a statement, not a puzzlement. These Jews were importuning their God for relief, but with a confidence about the limits of adversity. Were there ever Jews again who could pretend to such a confidence? It was not long, indeed, before the history of this people came to seem like the repetition of a single sanguine pattern. The seventeenth-century Jewish chronicles of the anti-Semitic massacres of Chmelnitsky's Ukrainians identify them with the Crusaders; the writings of Jews in the ghettos of the Nazis abound with references to the Ukrainians; and we are just completing a quarter of a century in which the Nazis have been adduced, stupidly but sincerely, by Jews fighting the Palestinians. ("A straight, unbroken line," as Benjamin Netanyahu writes in his crude new book, *A Place Among The Nations, Israel and the World,* which explains why what happened last week will never happen.) But here is Arafat, that is to say, Hitler, that is to say, Chmelnitsky, that is to say, Radulf the Cistercian, recognizing the Jewish state. The typological account of Jewish history is challenged. Amalek has appeared on the White House lawn. The siege version is under siege.

I was not pleased to have Ephraim of Bonn crash the party, and intrude on my astonishment about the outbreak of sense and respect between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. I resented his durability, and the durability of the inhibition on Jewish hope that he exemplified. And yet it was salutary, I guess, to grasp the magnitude of the obstacle that collective memory poses to practical reason. For the prospect of peace in their state is, for the Jews, a truly revolutionary prospect. The establishment of the state was supposed to have accomplished this

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revolution; but the struggle for survival damaged the revolutionary meaning of the state, by making the continuity with exile seem greater than the discontinuity. As long as there was war, Jewish experience was different in degree, but not in kind; or so it could plausibly seem to many Jews. The achievement of sovereignty failed to refute the fatalistic reading of Jewish history. Only the achievement of peace will refute it.

An irony has been played on Jewish nationalism. It has been forced to concede that "the normalization of the Jewish people," the envy of banality that Zionism promoted into an ideal, cannot be realized solely by the efforts of the Jews themselves. The monumental self-reliance that Zionism introduced into Jewish life sufficed to secure survival, but it did not suffice to secure normality. Insofar as the collective memory of the Jews refers, for the purpose of painting its cheerless portrait of Jewish life among the nations, to the actions of the nations, and not to the actions of the Jews, it is they, the nations, and not the Jews, who have the power to revise that portrait and to repeal that cheerlessness.

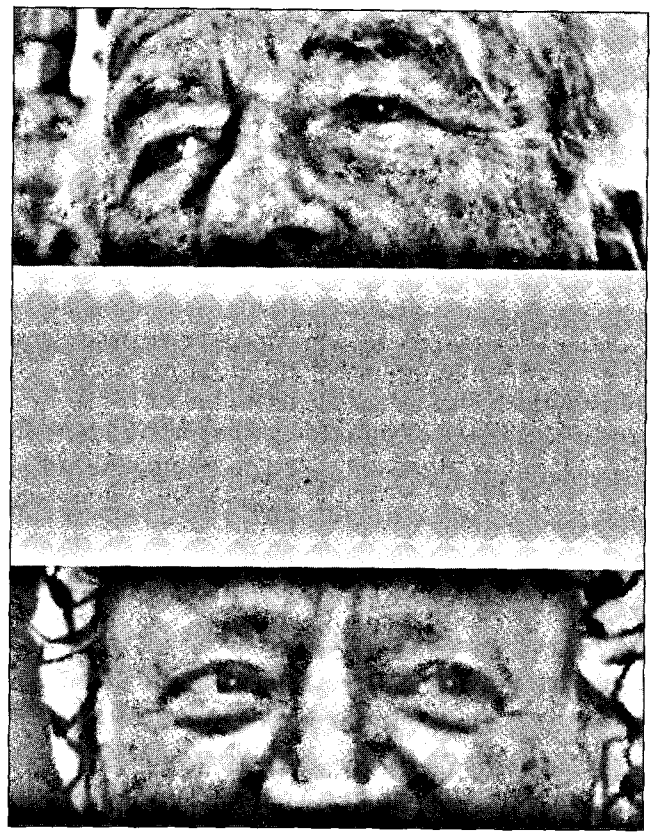

ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC BAKER FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

For a certain kind of jingoism, most perfectly represented on the Israeli side by Ariel Sharon, who rushed to New York last week to stab the nation in the back and demand that the American Jews take to the streets against Israel, this is not an edifying truth; and yet it is truth enough to banish any fantasy of the fortress. Isolation, morbid or splendid, is impossible. And those figures in the Labor party in Israel who praise the new diplomatic understandings for promising a "separation" between Israelis and Palestinians are also missing the loveliness of this moment. For the gravity of this conflict, and its savagery, is owed to its intimacy, to the density of implication in which Israelis and Palestinians find themselves, to the finality of their entanglement with each other.

The Jewish opponents of the peace will argue that it stands in contradiction to the collective memory of the Jews. And so it does; but that is one of its most fetching qualities. The traditional account of Jewish suffering, after all, described it as a punishment, not as a fate; the Jews, and certainly the Jews of Israel, never taught their children to expect nothing but war. Moreover, collective memory is not the same thing as historical truth. The history of the Jewish relationship with the nations was wretched enough to justify the rejection of the exile, but it was not sheer wretchedness. By setting the standard of the people's unhappiness chillingly low, the tradition raised the standard of the people's happiness chillingly high. (The common name for that chilling height was messianism, of which the Jews have been, most of the time, sublimely suspicious.) If the unhappiness was perfect, then the happiness will be perfect. If all was dark, then all will be light. If the vulnerability was total, then the invulnerability will be total.

And so the opponents of the peace, preying upon the existential basis for the Jewish mistrust of the world, warn that there are risks. They are right. There are risks. It is a delinquency of political leadership, however, to invite people to imagine a life without risk. There are greater risks and there are lesser risks, and not all the lesser risks are the slippery slope to the greater risks. When Benjamin Netanyahu warns about "a full-fledged war that could be launched against Israel ... open to invading armies from the east," what on earth is he warning about? The invading army of Jordan, which has told the Americans that it may conclude an agreement as early as next week? The invading army of Syria, which is also preparing to conclude an agreement? The invading army of Palestinians, perhaps, formed and fitted out with advanced weaponry in the still of night, while Israel sleeps? But Israel is not proposing to sleep; it is proposing to live with exquisite wakefulness, but in peace.

The Palestinians have the power to disrupt Israel, in its streets and in its consciences; but the Palestinians do not have the power, the Palestinians will never have the power, to destroy Israel, and so the fear of the Palestinians is a little ludicrous. It is also a little indecent: when the lion lies down with the lamb, it is the lamb, not the lion, who lies down anxiously. Netanyahu warns of terrorism, he has made a career of warning against terrorism, and he has a point. But he might take a look around him, at the state of Israeli-Palestinian relations in the absence of peace, at the fine, unappeased, iron-fisted, nerve-jangling universe of stones and knives and bullets over which his party has presided. Jerusalem, where its Jews and its Arabs meet, is more and more like Belfast; and where its Jews

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and its Arabs do not meet, it is more and more like the city of 1949-1967, a city of sullenness and broken beauty. And in the north, the rockets from southern Lebanon fly.

So is terror really the fruit of peace? Anyway, the Likud had fifteen years to solve the problem of terrorism, fifteen years to solve the problem of the Palestinians. The governments of Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir tried war, assassination, repression, settlement and the expropriation of land, mass deportation, collective punishment, and the creation of a climate of intolerance and inflammation. And here they still are, these fear artists, worrying about the problem of terrorism and the problem of the Palestinians. The conclusion is clear. The ways of the Likud were tried and the ways of the Likud failed.

Of the complicated nature of Jewish life in the exile, of its ideologically useless mixture of happiness and unhappiness, vitality and oppression, Zionism did not wish to know; but the necessary fictions of a revolutionary movement have now degenerated into the cynical fictions of a tired know-nothing party, whose purpose seems to be not only to oppose any peace with the Palestinians and any surrender of territory for peace, but also to sustain the population of Israel in a permanent state of apocalyptic tension, a condition of instability that the Likud mistakes for a condition of vigilance. It is not likely that Yitzhak Rabin needs Benjamin Netanyahu's little lessons in vigilance. The new accords, the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the autonomous Palestinian regions and the eventual enfranchisement of the Palestinians in a single, large, and free region, are premised in large measure upon the political utility of Israeli military power. The Likud, however, grasps only the military utility of Israeli military power. It shows a weakness for shows of strength. It does not seem to understand that an army not at war is not an idle army, at least when it is an army as mighty as the Israeli army.

Peace, when it is made with open eyes and strong hands, is a way of honoring the costs of war. The naysaying of the Likud, then, must not be permitted to pass for a proper commemoration of its country's wounds. Quite the contrary. The pessimism of the Likud—and of the American Jewish critics of the Rabin-Arafat experiment, whose license to criticize from their safe distance the freely elected government of a sovereign state has provided a welcome spot of comedy—represents a confusion of scars and wounds, a promotion of scars to wounds. And in the middle of this epiphany, with evil almost certainly waiting in the wings, as the forces of rejection collect themselves on both sides, the distinction between scars and wounds must not be lost.

For both parties to this peace are victims, big and bitter victims, whatever the order of magnitude, whatever the chronology of victimization. They have, both these nations, suffered so much and so long that they bear their scars grandiosely, as essential features of an identity, as relics of a sacred history, as tests of the extent to which others represent them as they wish to be represented. And so both of them, almost as a matter of emotional and cultural course, could let the scars do the work of the wounds, and the memory of oppression do the work of oppression.

This would be catastrophic. It would rob political action of its empirical basis, rob the evidence of experience of its power to persuade the mind. There are no unscarred people, after all, in the blade-shaped, much-too-holy land between the river and the sea. They are all gruesomely equipped to honor their past in a manner that will ruin their future. And so, as Israelis and Palestinians are being warned, not unwisely, about the hard times ahead of them, they should be warned, too, about the hard times behind them. Those hard times, the ones that are past, must not be forgotten, but they also must be let go. A scar is not a wound. It is the record of a wound that is healing, or is healed.

I do not doubt that there will be no peace until one day a Palestinian flag flies over a demilitarized Palestinian state that consists of most, but not all, of the occupied territories. But the establishment of such a state will have to be preceded by reassurance. The Palestinians will have to demonstrate to the Israelis that they prize their freedom more than their zeal, the quotidian satisfactions of political self-determination more than the chiliastic satisfactions of historical restoration; and that they can restrain the militant religious ferment in their midst, and not threaten their neighbors with their own disorder. But here is Rashid Khalidi, on the day after the signing of the interim accord, denouncing the interim and "the idea of phases," when the interim and "the idea of phases" is the small price, the wise price, the price of a few years in a conflict of a hundred years, that the Palestinians will have to pay for their alienation of the Israelis with whom they have resolved to live. Those Palestinians who are offended by the need to reassure the Israelis are simply not serious about the search for Palestinian statehood. And there must be self-overcoming on the other side, too. The Israelis will have to demonstrate to the Palestinians that they really have not become enamored of their reach, and cozy in their dominion over others; and that they really are the masters of their fears.

The particulars of the deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians are still in the hands of the negotiators. But the image of that swift, febrile, grudging handshake on the White House lawn will live forever in the hearts of all who saw it. It was there, under the late morning sky clearing itself of clouds, that I reminded myself that collective memory need not contain only the memory of injustice; that justice, too, can be commemorated, by a whole people, unto the generations. It is true that the modern Jews know more than the medieval Jews. Disaster did strike twice. It struck a hundred times. But it need not strike a thousand times, or forever. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Civilizations

Woody Allen makes two kinds of films: those completely of his own devising (*Annie Hall, Manhattan*) and those patently modeled on predecessors (*Stardust Memories, Interiors,* homages to Fellini and Bergman respectively). His new one, **Manhattan Murder Mystery** (TriStar), is in the latter group: it's based on The Movies. It's the sort of comedy-mystery that we associate with Bob Hope (*The Cat and the Canary,* etc.) but that in fact antedated Hope by decades. And Allen ends his story in a movie theater, behind a screen on which *The Lady from Shanghai* is showing. Allen's finish is braided with the famous house-of-mirrors finish in the Welles film. There's even an echo of Everett Sloane's canes in *The Lady* with a cane used by a woman in Allen's film.

The tone and milieu are still Allen—Manhattan Jewish with lots of Allen's Manhattan Jewish humor—but to a greater degree than usual with him, the picture is plotty. The screenplay by Allen and Marshall Brickman is, like most screenplays in this genre, an arrangement. A lot of unexpected things have to happen in the course of such a picture, arranged so that they can all be explained at the end. This kind of romp-mystery doesn't exist to be satisfactorily solved but to provide laughs and shocks throughout, which this one does. In fact, we don't even really care much about the solution, as long as the explanation is gotten through fairly quickly. Anjelica Huston handles it here, briskly.

Diane Keaton, after a sixteen-year absence from the Allen fold, rejoins him, playing his wife. He is an editor at HarperCollins. They have a college-age son and have neighbors in their apartment house who are seemingly nice. (Seemingly. O*ho*!) He and she are floating along in middle age. Keaton, to busy herself, is thinking of opening a restaurant, possibly with Alan Alda, a newly single friend. Instead she opens a murder case, with the help of Alda.

The trouble begins with the sudden death by coronary of a woman who lived down the hall with her husband of twenty-eight years. Suspicion grows in Keaton's mind, despite Allen's dismissals, that foul play was involved. He keeps trying to calm her down with lots of Allen gags, like suggesting that she save a little craziness for menopause. But she persists, is proved right in her suspicions, and then Allen, too, gets entangled in the case.

It all moves quickly and, within the limits of comedy-mystery reason, logically. The laugh lines are frequent. (Keaton drags Allen to a performance of *The Flying Dutchman,* and he insists on leaving, saying that after he listens to Wagner for a while, he feels like invading Poland.) Allen's directing skills are as good as they have latterly become, except for some vestiges of the hand-held camera flummery that so addled *Husbands and Wives.* He contrives to include, too, some of his continuing adoration of Manhattan; for instance, under the credits he uses a Cole Porter ode to New York sung by our Bard Laureate, Bobby Short.

To a surprising degree, Keaton manages to belie her age, or aging, by holding to her familiar flaky style, riffing on every line with interjections and repetitions, almost persuading us that she is the same old (young) Keaton. Will she someday play grandmothers who riff? Alda is amiable as the friend who almost becomes a corner in a triangle. Huston has a small part as an author of Allen's and convinces us utterly that she is a woman of experience and resource. Also, she is strikingly dressed.

The picture's one big drawback, which keeps it from being completely amusing, is Allen's performance. He cannot act. He never could act. There's no sign, at this late date, that he ever will be able to act. He is a desperate, frantic amateur. He proved this, if it needed proving, when he played in someone else's script in *Scenes from a Mall.* His amateurishness is slightly mitigated in his own films because we're aware that he is the author of the funny lines he's speaking. But the contrast between the professional writer and the amateur actor is off-putting.

His part here, through most of the picture, consists of "Yes, but" acting. Character A (Keaton in this case) embarks on a certain course and Character B (Allen) tries to dissuade. His dialogue consists of a lot of lines like "Yes, but how do you know? How can

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Betty. *Claude Chabrol's latest, about a young dissolute woman who doesn't really want to halt her dissolution, is very French—and is, naturally, very well directed. (Reviewed 9/13/93)* **Guelwaar.** *Ousmane Sembène, the film laureate of Senegal, works, as usual, through simplicity to depth. A seemingly farcical loss of a corpse just before a funeral discloses religious and social rifts in a village. (8/30/93)* **In the Line of Fire.** *Clint Eastwood, as a Secret Service agent who feels responsible for JFK's murder, guards the current president against a brilliant would-be assassin. Top-notch entertainment. (8/9/93)* **Much Ado About Nothing.** *Kenneth Branagh directed and played Benedick, with his wife, Emma Thompson, as Beatrice, and so much happiness flows therefrom that even the four out-of-place Americans in the cast can be overlooked. (5/10/93)* **—SK**

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you possibly—" as Keaton overrides him. "Yes, but" acting needs a clear follow-through in the mind of a performer, some idea of the person who exists while the other character is speaking. Allen just interrupts on cue, gesticulates and flubbers until Keaton drives on, and then semaphores painfully banal signs of impatience until his next cue comes. There's no one home there. It's Amateur Night. What the part needed was Dustin Hoffman or Richard Dreyfuss. They are actors, not writers who think they know their material so well that of course they can perform it.

Some of the actors in **Samba Traoré** (New Yorker) are acknowledged amateurs, natives of Burkina Faso, where the film is set, but the roles they play are apparently so much in the fabric of their usual lives that there are no seams. They are helped, too, the director tells us, by the fact that he tailored scenes to fit them. They are also helped by the fact that none of them (I assume) has any professional ambition so there's no self-consciousness, no attempt to "do" what they are doing.

Some of the actors, however, are professional and have had training. Bakary Sangareé, who has the title role, has even worked with Peter Brook in Paris. The paradoxical triumph of the professionals here is that they are indistinguishable from the amateurs.

Idrissa Ouédraogo is the author-director, the man who did *Yaaba* and *Tilai* and who again shows such confident skill that his purity of intent comes through unimpeded. The new film, though it's set among the same sorts of people, is basically different from the earlier ones. *Yaaba* and *Tilai* took their entire beings, their incidents and arch, from the dailiness of village life. *Samba Traoré* has more of a constructed story.

The film, spoken in Mooré, one of the country's many dialects, opens with Samba committing a robbery in the city. He flees to his native village with the loot, and we see how both village honesty and the police ultimately bring his misdeed into the open. The story doesn't open the sense of immensity that *Tilai* had; still, because of Ouédraogo's knowledge and love of the people, it has immediacy and warmth, it stirs concern.

Two points. First, I wasn't clear about the source, in this tiny remote village, of items that suddenly appear, like new beds, a new bicycle, a saddled horse. Second, Mariam Kaba, who plays Samba's eventual bride, is one of the most beautiful human beings I have seen in years. •

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Robert Brustein on Theater

All's Well That Ends in Melancholy

After a spirited *Measure for Measure* in July, the New York Shakespeare Festival produced a haunting **All's Well That Ends Well** in August. Much of the credit for these triumphs, surely among the best productions yet seen in Central Park, must go to JoAnne Akalaitis, who first conceived of pairing two of Shakespeare's most difficult problem plays with directors imported from England (the Texas-born Michael Rudman is an English resident). Akalaitis was not allowed to enjoy the fruits of her planning, having been removed from her job last spring, but she deserves a valedictory salute for helping to bring the Shakespeare Marathon to its maturity.

All's Well is the third American production directed by Richard Jones, who staged *La Bête* on Broadway in 1991 and a less successful production of Bulgakov's *Black Snow* with my own company last December. From his previous work in theater and opera, Jones was known as a stylist with a special flair for farce. Recently, he has been applying more tenebrous tones to his palette, and his *All's Well*, though not without its giddy moments, emerges as an unusually somber experience even by the standards of dark comedy. Always a strong visual director, Jones has provoked a stunning design from the English artist Stewart Laing, whose costumes and setting create an atmosphere of surreal disorientation.

Wide-screen movies broadcast on cable T.V. are often provided with a "letter-box" format, which elongates the width of the screen and narrows the height. This is a letter-box version of *All's Well That Ends Well.* The set sits in a horizontal opening that spreads across the entire expanse of the stage, with huge doors on either side, madly skewed and raked. This allows for continuous lateral motion and, with the aid of a traveler, uninterrupted scene changes. It also provides room for a few spectators to look down on the action from upstage, sometimes joining the scene by waving green flags.

The design is essentially an abstraction. On a sea-green backing, marked by an aqua blue strip, hangs a white Rothko-like panel with a Donald Judd-like sculpture in the center that doubles as a mirror. When the action moves to Italy, the panel divides to reveal a lovely Tuscan countryside, decked with burnt umber fields and a tiny medieval town reminiscent of Robert Wilson's miniature future cities. Washed by Mimi Jordan Sherin's sea-change lighting, the visual impact is ravishing. With this design, Laing takes his place alongside such brilliant young English designers as Bob Crowley and Antony Macdonald.

When the audience enters, a row of candles are flickering on stage, in front of a long table bearing the shrouded body of a man. The body seems to be laid out on a bier, and is guarded by a diminutive figure in black (played by a child) wearing a death's-head and carrying a scythe. But death is just waiting, not stinging, and this is no corpse. It is the King of France, languishing from a fistula, and when he is carried offstage by black-clad courtiers to the accompaniment of vibrating chimes and tinkling triangles, the miniature death's-head ominously follows. This figure will appear and reappear throughout the action. Jones has made disease and death the central metaphors of the play.

The decision seems entirely appropriate since not only is the King ailing but the play culminates in the resurrection of a "dead" woman, much like *The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles.* Helena will return from the dead to claim her recalcitrant husband. Before dealing with her own life-and-death problems, however, Helena must resurrect or resuscitate the King with a remedy she has inherited from her father, a famous physician. As shrewdly played by the Irish actress Miriam Healy-Louie, Helena is a shy, passionate, red-headed scholar in spectacles, lonely and abandoned, befriended only by the maternal Countess of Rousillon (endowed by Joan Macintosh with magisterial elegance).

Contrasting with images of death and disease, embodied in emblematic black, are images of innocence, embodied in white. In the cure scene, it is innocence that medicates disease. Helena, first seen wearing a white robe covered with a black cardigan, is a virgin in the shadow of death. If she fails to heal the king, her life will be forfeited. As she describes the secret remedy while the Countess braids her hair, the King is carried in on his long table by uniformed officers who turn his body to prevent bed sores and hover over him like figures in Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson.* She climbs on the king's table, facing him on her knees; he sits up, head bowed. When the lights come up after a blackout, the two are merrily dancing, while the courtiers applaud and stars sprinkle from the sky.

The reward she elects for curing the King is to choose her own husband. All of the court bachelors (including a 10-year-old child) appear before her, but she demands the hand of the Countess of Rousillon's son Bertram. It is Bertram's mean rejection of her (he finds her "base") that poses the major problem of the play, for why would this accomplished woman set her cap for such a soulless snob? Despite his contemptuous treatment, she persists in her chase. Her eagerness to cast off chastity makes Parolles's rebukes to her virginity ("it is too cold a companion ... away with it.... Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese") seem superfluous. By order of the King, Bertram is married in the Elizabethan equivalent of a shotgun wedding. (Shaw, praising Helena's aggressive pursuit, made her a model for the "unwomanly woman" Ann Whitefield in *Man and Superman.*) The wedding takes place in a slow march, just prior to everyone's departure for war. Helena poignantly expresses regret that she has chased Bertram from his native land (he can't wait to leave). She nevertheless undertakes to follow him to Italy, a pilgrim with a crook and a backpack.

Much of the second part is dominated by the antics of Parolles, a "notorious liar" and braggart soldier on the pattern of Pistol and Falstaff. As played by a goateed Michael Cumpsty, Parolles spends much of his time in front of a mirror, admiring his bright blue beriboned uniform. As the courtier Lafeu remarks, "The soul of this man is his clothes." By the end, this sartorial fop will be reduced to filthy long johns. Captured and blindfolded by his own soldiers speaking gibberish and pretending to be the enemy, Parolles instantly spills his guts about all the secrets of his camp. It is a scene reminiscent of Falstaff peaching on Prince Hal, but Parolles does not have the wit to extricate himself from charges of cowardice.

Bertram's lusty passion for Diana Capilet provides the means by which Helena can meet the conditions he has made for continuing their marriage—possession of his wedding ring and evidence of marital consummation. For like its companion piece of the summer, *Measure for Measure, All's Well* accom-

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plishes its climatic reconciliation through sexual deception (the Park's 1993 season might be called "The Bed Trick Repertory"). Waiting for Bertram, having substituted herself for Diana in the dark (she brings her own pillow and sheets), Helena lies on the same table that bore the body of the King, observed by the same diminutive figure of death.

And death is an attendant when the victorious army returns to France. Jones interpolates a scene in which the Countess of Rousillon has become sick and languishes on the table; instead of ending well, the play concludes in melancholy. Diana comes to accuse Bertram of seducing her, as Isabella accused Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, but discovers that Bertram is equally disposed to libel a decent woman (he calls her "a common gamester to the camp"). The "dead" Helena appears, rising through a trap, not only alive but quick with child. The entire stage turns blue. She and Bertram vow to love each other "ever ever dearly." But even this admittedly unconvincing hymeneal is dampened by the dying Countess, who is borne off stage in a slow-motion Robert Wilson-like procession, trailed by the figure of death.

Most of the acting, in addition to the standout performances of Healy-Louie and Macintosh, is strong and deep. Herb Foster is commanding as the King of France, Graham Winton properly sulky as Bertram, Patrice Johnson appealing as Diana Capilet, Patricia Kilgarriff decisive as her mother, Bette Henritze poignant as the Countess's companion and Henry Stram authoritative as the elderly courtier Lafeu. Cumpsty's Parolles, though well spoken, is more of an egotist than a braggart, a musical comedy star on the order of Robert Goulet. And Rocco Sisto's Lavatch, played as a bourgeois in a white-feathered fedora, lacks true eccentricity. The only genuine comedy is provided by the chorus--courtiers, waiting women and soldiers drilled within an inch of their lives—whether simultaneously lighting clay pipes during the interrogation scene or returning from Italy with identical suitcases. Still, comedy is not the point of Jones's production. His approach is more akin to Beaumont and Fletcher's tragicomedy, a style that skirts perilously close to disaster without falling off the edge.

Let me say a word, too, in praise of Jonathan Dove's original music, as performed by some fine instrumentalists under the direction of Alan Johnson. The continuous underscoring of mostly mournful melodies enhances the funereal proceedings at every point (except during the unmasking of Parolles, when it seems inappropriate). The doleful music accomplishes the same function as the surreal set and the ethereal acting style, which is to shut out both the bucolic splendor of the Park and the urban grit of the city, and plant the audience in a wholly invented atmosphere. Even with jets and helicopters roaring over our heads, we are persuaded of worlds we never imagined. •

Only Connect

By Alan Wolfe

The Moral Sense
by James Q. Wilson

(The Free Press, 300 pp., $22.95)

Mother-Infant Bonding: A Scientific Fiction
by Diane E. Eyer

(Yale University Press, 237 pp., $25)

In an unusually prolific scholarly career, James Q. Wilson has written about city politics, bureaucracy, crime, government regulation, race, urban renewal, drugs, the police and the family. Now he turns to morality, the master theme that links them all. Like the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, Wilson seeks to understand the sensibilities that make it possible for individuals to live together. His aim is to show that "we have a moral sense, most people instinctively rely on it even if intellectuals deny it, but it is not always and in every aspect of life strong enough to withstand a pervasive and sustained attack."

The study of morality varies inversely with the perceived morality of society. Durkheim turned to questions of morality around the time of the Dreyfus case. American social scientists did so around the time of Watergate—or, more appropriately for Wilson's concerns, around the time of wanton crime, family breakdown, value relativism and collapsing standards. Wilson addresses timeless themes for timely reasons. He thinks that Americans no longer know how to talk about morality. To help them out, he offers them the benefit of a wide reading in fields ranging from evolutionary biology to animal ethology and pharmacology.

If those seem odd subjects for a book about morality, it is because Wilson believes passionately that science has a great deal to teach about humans, and not least about their moral behavior. "However much the scientific method is thought to be the enemy of morality," he notes, "scientific findings provide substantial support for its existence and power." Through science we learn that a particular part of the brain—the cingulate gyrus of the limbic system—may be the locus of our sociability. Individual differences in aggressive behavior are probably linked to enzymes such as monoamine oxidase, or to neurological transmitters such as serotonin. Even in the absence of direct chemical traces, Darwinian theory leads to the conclusion that "the moral sense must have an adaptive value: if it did not, natural selection would have worked against people who had such useless traits as sympathy, self-control or a desire for fairness in favor of those with the opposite tendencies."

The trump card that demonstrates, for Wilson, the importance of biology for the understanding of human behavior is the bonding that takes place when a new infant is born. "The mechanism underlying human moral conduct is the desire for attachment or affiliation. That desire is evident in the instinctively prosocial behavior of the newborn infant and in the instinctively caring response that parents make to that behavior." Just as labradors are born to fetch, Wilson writes, we are born to bond. Infants are naturally sociable, seeking out human contact from a very early age. Parents bond to the cuteness of babies, as if Darwinian evolution produced just those physical features in infants that gladden our hearts and make us determined to protect and to provide. ("Scientists have not, in my view, taken the concept of 'cute' sufficiently seriously.")

In Wilson's account, the origins of nothing less than all of human society seem to lie in the first six months of life. And this innate drive to bond creates a

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universal moral imperative in all times and all places. "If culture were the all-powerful source of human character that some imagine it to be, then cultural differences would cause bonding differences to a greater extent than seems to be the case." Everywhere people tend to their own first, and to strangers (when they tend to them at all) later. Fortunately for those who live in the West, the family developed in a way that transformed the natural sociability of the infant into care for the distant others. (This is not Wilson's only explanation of the Western advantage; religion, the rise of commerce and the ideology of individualism all played a role.)

Wilson argues that we should not confuse moral rules, which vary between cultures, with moral dispositions, which, because natural, are constant. People are preprogrammed to be prosocial, but that does not mean that the machine is always turned on. Only when families carry out their moral training satisfactorily will the innate moral sense be activated. And in assigning such an important role to the family, Wilson tackles the question of sex roles. He oddly calls this chapter "Gender," a term popularized by feminists to make the point that sex roles are defined not by nature, but by culture.

Starting from birth, Wilson argues, the bonding process that makes human society possible is disproportionately the mother's business. Fathers are not naturally inclined to bond. They have to be roped in. "Since human infants require a long period of care after birth, a central problem for women living anywhere but in the most nurturing environments is to find ways of inducing the male to supply the resources necessary to make this care possible." Women are a sex, while men are a gender; women belong to nature, because they have nurturing instincts, whereas men, because they have to be taught to be human, are a product of culture. To get men to play a role in nurturance for which nature has poorly equipped them, women use social conventions such as courtship to test the commitments of their prospective males. A stable society is one that links the natural morality of women with the socialization of men's aggressive drives. Families do this best, but schools and other social institutions can help; and whatever institutions are called upon, "the habitual performance of duties" rather than the adherence to moral precepts is more likely to guarantee results.

Wilson's argument, in sum, is that bonding is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition, for the preservation of moral order. On the one hand, everything flows from it:

> Our moral senses are forged in the crucible of this loving relationship and expanded by the enlarged relationships of families and peers. Out of the universal attachment between child and parent the former begins to develop a sense of empathy and fairness, to learn self-control and to acquire a conscience that makes him behave more dutifully at least with respect to some matters.

On the other hand, moral sentiments—duty, self-control, fairness—have to be taught. And there are enough examples of immoral behavior around to indicate that they are not always taught well.

Wilson concludes on a note of great moral concern. The Enlightenment's legacy has been "ambiguous" with respect to the formation of moral character. The freedom of liberal democracies is essential to the cultivation of character, but modernity also makes it difficult to control impulses and to encourage duties. Wilson imagines our moral sense as a candle rather than a beacon: the flame still shines, even if dimly, but if we pay careful attention and nurture its atmosphere, the flame can grow and illumine us once again.

From Wilson's perspective, the discovery of mother-infant bonding is the great contribution that science makes to morality. "The single most important discovery has been the importance to the child of having a strong and affectionate bond to the parents, especially to the mother," he writes, citing the work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. "There is some controversy over how this measurement is done and what the measure implies," Wilson continues, "but relatively little over the importance of what is being measured—the mother-child bond."

Relatively little controversy, indeed. It would be more precise to note that research seeking to prove the importance of the mother-child bond has been subjected to as withering a critique as any scientific finding has ever encountered. And the critique has, in general, been a persuasive one. Studies that purport to show long-term positive effects from early infant bonding are filled with methodological errors, unexamined assumptions and shifting conceptualizations. Nancy Scheper-Hughes has shown how extremely poor women in Brazil do not bond at all, in part because they know that their infants are unlikely to live. The concept of bonding as it has evolved among scientists has dropped the mother as the necessary adhesive to her own infant. There may be general agreement that bonding is a good thing. There is no general agreement that bonding between a specific mother and a specific child is the only way to achieve it.

Diane Eyer's *Mother-Infant Bonding* tells the story of how it came to pass that psychiatrists, psychologists, pediatricians, nurses and finally the general public accepted the idea that very early contact between mother and infant could prevent anti-social behavior sometime later on. As Eyer relates it, Bowlby became interested in the question of maternal deprivation as early as 1927, when he worked as a child psychologist at the London Child Guidance Clinic. Bowlby argued that boys became delinquent because institutionalization deprived them of the mother love required for full human adjustment. Heavily influenced by psychoanalytic theory, he believed that only the mother could serve as a substitute ego and super-ego for an infant lacking in any self-conception.

Ainsworth was not persuaded by Bowlby's psychoanalytic explanation of attachment, but she added substantial empirical evidence for the proposition that small infants need their mothers. Her studies in Uganda, first carried out in 1955, demonstrated that infants became attached to their mothers at six months and showed fear of strangers at about nine months. Ainsworth also hypothesized that the more responsive and loving the mother was to her infant, the more likely the infant was to attach itself to the mother. This finding, later replicated among infants in Baltimore, came to be known as the "strange situation" test. Small infants could adapt more easily to strange situations—such as the mother leaving the room—when their attachments were secure. If their attachments were insecure, or what Ainsworth called "avoidant," strange situations became more traumatic.

These studies were not the only ones that tried to prove the existence of a natural bond between mother and infant. The most influential studies of all were carried out by John Kennell and Marshall Klaus, and were published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* in 1972. They showed that as few as sixteen hours of close contact between mother and infant immediately after birth produced better results on child development scales as late as five years after. Based on their research, the practice of childbirth in many American hospitals was radically transformed. Instead of removing the newborn (fear of infection was the justification), mothers were now allowed to hold and to breast-feed their children

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immediately. The work of Kennell and Klaus provided scientific foundation for natural childbirth, special birthing rooms in hospitals, even home birth.

The cult of happy childbirth that overtook America in the 1980s seems one of those typically American mixtures of Rousseauian naturalism and scientific authority. But while there may have been good reasons to dehospitalize childbirth, scientific support for mother-infant bonding was not one of them. For one thing, the effects that Bowlby attributed to mother deprivation were much more likely the result of institutionalization itself. And Bowlby seemed to change the theoretical basis for his ideas about attachment with each decade. Psychoanalytic theory was anything but uncontested, and most of the leading interpreters of its latest wrinkles, including Anna Freud, Melanie Klein and D.W. Winnicott, dismissed Bowlby's conjectures as simple-minded.

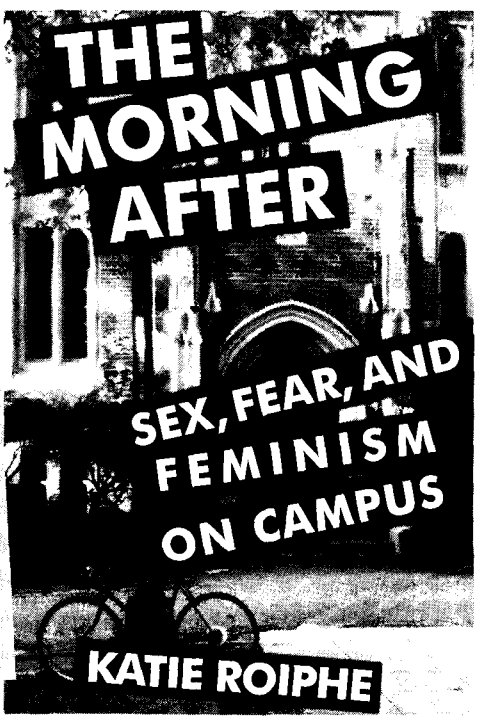
Perhaps in response to their criticisms, Bowlby began to shift his theoretical ground. When Harry Harlow discovered that baby monkeys miss their mothers, Bowlby quickly adopted his finding. When Darwinian ideas once again became popular explanations of why some human practices survive and others disappear, Bowlby began to argue that attachment was a mechanism of evolutionary survival. It is now accepted by most students of family dynamics that Bowlby's work was a product of its social and cultural moment, a response to the domestic turmoil around motherhood and work in the years after World War II.

In a similar manner, Ainsworth's work has also been subject to extensive scrutiny by developmental psychologists such as Michael Lamb (one of her students) and Jerome Kagan. Ainsworth's samples were extremely small—only twenty-six mother-infant pairs in Baltimore—and often they were socioeconomically and ethnically homogeneous. Lamb showed that human infants, as well as other animal infants, bonded also to styrofoam. To demonstrate how ideas about childrearing reflect cultural practices, Kagan has pointed out how Ainsworth's notion of "attachment," which was presumably good, merged into the concept of "overprotected," which was bad. Kagan argued that the fear demonstrated by infants in a strange situation can be taught, meaning that it is not necessarily a response to maternal avoidance. Finally, many other things besides maternal attachment, such as the infant's level of irritability, can be responsible for observed behavioral differences later on.

Wilson acknowledges these controversies, and agrees that there is "no consensus yet in sight." But there is more. The most devastating blows against mother-infant bonding were launched in response to Kennell and Klaus. Surely mothers should hold and feed their infants immediately after birth, but the notion that sixteen hours of face-to-face contact can prevent juvenile delinquency later on is patently absurd. Eyer, reviewing the entire literature spawned by their studies, shows how shoddy their research design was. They could not effectively control for other factors that might have affected child development, such as the mother's level of poverty or the physical state of the infant. The experiments, moreover, were not "blind"; researchers knew which group of children were associated with which mothers, with the result that their knowledge could have affected the results. Kennell and Klaus argued for a natural link between mother and child, but the infants that they studied were deprived of their mother's breast—through which, presumably, nature does its work. They relied on notions of instinct that are hotly contested among psychologists. As was the case with Bowlby, crucial support for their conclusions came from the study of non-human species.

As a result of these controversies, the

Has sisterhood become victimhood?



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idea of bonding underwent a significant transformation. Researchers began to suggest that it was not important that the mother provide the bonding, that any kind of bonding will do. If this were true, however, then one-half of the biological basis for the theory—the half that says that the mother instinctively bonds as much as the child—might have to be significantly revised. Bonding began as a precise concept defined down to the smallest details of contact, but it changed its meaning every time it was challenged, until it wound up meaning very little at all. As Eyer summarizes, "Today, the attachment concept has broadened almost enough to describe the successful development of babies being raised by multiple caretakers—a situation originally thought to cause maternal deprivation."

Mother-infant bonding, then, is too flawed a concept on which to build a theory of much of anything, let alone a theory of morality. Still, flawed as it is, Eyer has not proved that the concept is meaningless. Some studies have shown links between close contact and psychological development. (Many premature infants develop more quickly if they are held frequently than if they are left under incubators.) And if a concept changes in response to criticism and further study, well, that is exactly what science demands. The career of the notion of bonding teaches a lesson not about ideology, but about the sciences that deal with human behavior. Those sciences propose ideas. Those ideas are sometimes shown to be correct and sometimes shown to be incorrect. At the end of the process, if the process ever ends, we are left with evidence that can be interpreted in different ways. Still, there is evidence; and it often helps generate a consensus among scientists, if no one else.

In Eyer's zeal to dismiss bonding completely—she even proposes that the term be abolished—she has produced a book with all the flaws of the radical scholarship of the 1960s. Eyer dismisses every reference to biology as reactionary, evidently not knowing that "progressives" were once firm believers in evolution and eugenics. Bonding, from her perspective, is simply part of a war against women, though even she is forced to note that the notion was actually associated with feminism in one of its guises. Wilson's belief that social practices survive because they are functional for society is exactly assumed by Eyer, for whom bonding "is highly efficient, the fundamental goal of a technological society." Like the radical social scientists of an earlier era, Eyer misreads Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* as an argument that science is a social construction. Somehow she turns a discussion of fetal monitoring into an analysis of the plight of poor women. Whatever happens—whether bonding is accepted or rejected—women always lose.

In the end, Eyer's objection is not to shoddy scientific research, but to all scientific research, at least for the purpose of shedding light on moral issues. "Even when research is well constructed, once the findings are used for guidelines for moral behavior, there is great danger that the results will be shaped to suit variable social and political ends.... Unfortunately, women are in special danger of being victims of science." By Eyer's logic, if we discover that a lack of nutrition among poor women tends to keep them poor, then we should suppress what we have discovered so as not to oppress poor women. Eyer has nicely demonstrated how science can be flawed. By putting ideology in its place, however, she shows why flawed science is better than no science at all.

Wilson is as enthusiastic about science as Diane Eyer is skeptical. In turning to science, Wilson presumably hopes to make a stronger case for the importance of the moral sense than can be made by simply stating that the moral sense is a good thing that we ought to appreciate. But does it really make sense to address moral dilemmas on the basis of scientific findings? Can we learn what to do about single-parent families, delinquency, gay rights or even the environment by brushing up on biology? And even if we are skeptical of the ability of the natural sciences to help us resolve moral issues, can we rely on the conclusions of the social sciences, which themselves seem uncertain, if not contradictory?

These, after all, are deeply controversial issues. *The Moral Sense* generally refrains from taking on the questions of the day, but Wilson clearly believes that moral people will live their lives in some ways and not in other ways. Wilson wants to see a society in which individuals are brought up to respect other people. They will keep their instincts under control. They will be concerned with issues of equity and fairness, which means rewarding people in proportion to the efforts they expend. And they will have a sense of duty that will lead them "to honor obligations in the absence of social rewards for doing so."

As Wilson would be the first to recognize, such moral sensibilities presuppose a specific regime, one that respects private property and allows for limited democracy. This seems to suggest that capitalism is justified, because it accords with nature, while radical equality cannot last and is not morally justifiable, because it violates the innate dispositions of human beings. Although Wilson comes close to arguing this way at some points in his book, he does not really believe that nature determines what the tax rate should be or how we ought to regulate airlines. For one thing, the thrust of his book is against the ubiquity of self-interested rational behavior, the kind that capitalism is supposed to like, and which is so popular in the social sciences. For another, if Wilson thought that people were naturally inclined to adopt the kind of political system he favors, then he would be wildly optimistic. But the tone of his book is often elegiac and pessimistic, as if we can never quite get the moral character we are supposed to have.

Those who believe that nature determines our moral dispositions, moreover, must develop policy recommendations different from Wilson's. His widely published writings make it clear that he favors greater discipline in the schools and in the criminal justice system, and an increased emphasis on what is usually called the "traditional" family. But these are the policy recommendations of a cultural determinist, not a biological determinist. If men are by nature irresponsible and women are by nature caring, then surely one-parent families ought to be preferred over traditional ones; let groups of women come together and raise children, some working to support the others, and we will have better adjusted adults a generation later. And if some children are biologically disposed to be criminals, then surely no amount of discipline can help them, unless we believe that social institutions can trump biological instincts.

Wilson wrote his book to make the point that science undergirds his view of human beings and undercuts the views of those he opposes: value relativists, liberal social scientists, the media elite. But if mother-infant bonding is the foundation of his argument, as he sometimes seems to claim, then he has built his edifice on as shaky a foundation as one could find. Wilson himself undermines his groundings when he acknowledges, from time to time, that the mother may not be essential to the bonding process. And there is no research on infants that predicts their later behavior. (Infant I.Q. has little to do with I.Q. after the age of 5.)

Even the most convinced attachment theorists would be unlikely to accept

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what Wilson proposes in their name, for they are more concerned with establishing correlations than they are with generalizing the results to "large" questions of historical development and social policy. Wilson has read widely in the scientific literature and generally captures the spirit of scientific skepticism. In trying to reach morality through science, however, he fails to grasp the larger sensibility of science. Nature has no politics.

Wilson's language indicates that he knows he is on unstable ground. Is human personality genetically based? Here is his response, with my emphases: "A *good deal* of evidence suggests that *certain* aspects of personality ... are *to some degree* genetically determined." In the same paragraph Wilson argues that the study of twins and adopted children demonstrates that "much but not all" of personality is inherited, that altruism "may" also be inherited and that the notion that religiosity has a biological root is a "possibility." This is the appropriate language to use in describing these findings, but it is anything but the language of certainty. The same is even more true for social science. Some evidence exists that being raised in one-parent families causes long-term academic or even emotional problems; but cause and effect are murky enough, and other evidence inconclusive enough, that one social scientist quite properly notes that "there will never be anything like conclusive proof for this proposition unless we randomly assign babies at birth to single- and two-parent families of various economic and ethnic circumstances and then watch them grow up."

That social scientist is Wilson himself, in a recent article in *Commentary* on the "family values" debate. There he goes on to cite studies demonstrating the harmful effects of one-parent families, writing as if the truth of this proposition, while not provable in some ultimate sense, is becoming clearer every day. Wilson, in short, wants it both ways. His care and his respect for the difficulty of knowledge lead him to modify his assertions, but his desire to want to nail down his positions with the authority of science leads him to make those assertions in the first place. Rarely have I read a book that is so properly circumspect and so self-consciously ambitious at the same time. Cautious to a fault over the details, Wilson also generalizes far beyond what the evidence proves on the big questions.

The irony is that if Wilson had used science less, he might have used moral argument more. His ideas about sex roles, which others may find interesting but which I find bizarre, are best discussed as moral claims, not as scientific ones. If Wilson wants to argue that women, for the sake of their children and thereby the rest of society, should stay at home rather than work, he should say so rather than engaging in highly speculative notions about sexual selection. In moral debate, people can disagree. But Wilson all too rarely engages the reader in such a spirit.

One simply cannot begin with biology and end with a position on women in the work force, crime in the streets, condoms in the schools or drunks in the driver's seat. Wilson has had many interesting things to say about such matters, but only when he drops the mantle of science. Thus he writes movingly about why most people understand drug addiction or alcoholism as a moral failure. Self-control is so important a moral sentiment that we inevitably attach stigmas to those who so evidently lack it. But this means, as Wilson recognizes, that for most people such addictions cannot be written off as having a biological or neurological cause; if they could, the importance of families and friends in reenforcing self-control would be undermined.

It is surprising how many of the moral controversies that currently divide Americans—abortion, homosexuality, AIDS—touch on the realm of science. For that reason, we are likely to hear as many voices telling us that science cannot be trusted as that science has all the answers. These voices will cross political lines in unexpected ways. Thus many on the left, in recent years hostile to science, will argue that poverty is a medical epidemic, or that the way to treat AIDS properly is to teach sex education in elementary school. And many on the right, who tend to believe that biology is destiny, will argue that homosexuality is socially constructed.

It is enormously important, in such an atmosphere, to be clear about what science can and cannot teach. It can help us find answers, but it cannot, by itself, provide those answers. Wilson comes far closer to the proper use of science than Eyer, but he does not come close enough. "Most of the time," he writes, "we do not live by 'rules' at all but by habits and sensibilities." But even if our sensibilities have biological or genetic roots, which I doubt, our habits do not. It is odd that someone who believes in the good moral sense of ordinary people, who proudly distrusts the abstractions of intellectuals, would write a book based on the most intellectual style of thought

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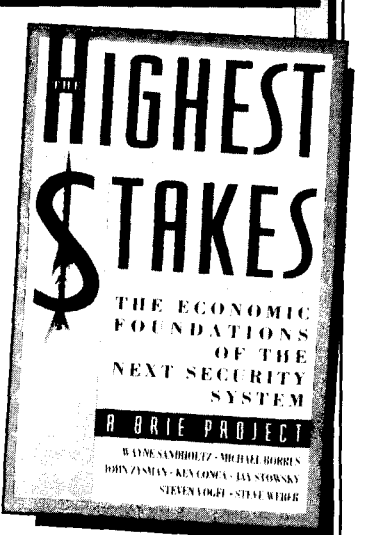

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possible, namely science, and ignore sociology, the field that, at least at its best, takes the habits and the sensibilities of ordinary people as its focus. Wilson, after all, is one of America's most distinguished social scientists. It is a shame that, in this book, he ventures far from his expertise, in search of a certainty that, he believes, science can provide. Yet moral certainty is not, and must not be, the same thing as scientific certainty. All the sciences, physical and social, can tell us much about the world, but none of them can tell us the proper way to live in it.

ALAN WOLFE is University Professor and professor of sociology at Boston University. He is the author most recently of *The Human Difference: Animals, Computers and the Necessity of Social Science* (University of California Press).

Professors of Desire

BY TZVETAN TODOROV

Love and Friendship by Allan Bloom

(Simon & Schuster, 590 pp., $25)

Esteem Enlivened by Desire: The Couple from Homer to Shakespeare by Jean H. Hagstrum

(University of Chicago Press, 518 pp., $36)

It is very difficult to write a book on the expression of love in the Western World. The reason is simple: men and women have not been satisfied merely to love and to suffer from the lack of love, they have also needed to express themselves on the subject. The literature on love, to say nothing of the other arts, is endless. And in it one finds every distinction, every connection, every question. This might suffice to discourage even those with the best of intellectual intentions.

But love would not be love if the difficulty of the enterprise succeeded in keeping all comers away; and since, in our time, the customary way of discussing a subject is to discuss those who have already discussed it, one continues to find voluminous histories of the art, the literature and the philosophy of love. These big books, by Allan Bloom and by Jean H. Hagstrum, are no exceptions to the rule. But they have vastly different modes of confronting the central difficulty of their subject, which is its overabundance.

Hagstrum circumscribes the subject in a variety of ways. His central interest is with the form of love that is nicely denoted by the title of his book: the long-term attachment of the heterosexual couple. He does not examine the Western tradition of love in its entirety, but only—only!—that part of it that runs from Homer to Shakespeare. And even though philosophy, painting, religion and social life are not absent from his purview, Hagstrum devotes most of his attention to imaginative literature. Within these restrictions, however, the book does aspire to exhaustiveness. And so we are presented with a procession of unforgettable couples: Achilles and Penthesilea, Persephone and Hades, Zeus and Hera, Odysseus and Penelope, Adam and Eve, Samson and Delilah, Ruth and Boaz, Cupid and Psyche, Philemon and Baucis, Alcyone and Ceyx, Daphnis and Chloe, Hero and Leander, Heloise and Abelard, Tristan and Isolde, Lancelot and Gwenyvere, Dante and Beatrice, Paolo and Francesca, Aucassin and Nicolette, Romeo and Juliet, Desdemona and Othello. There are also hundreds of lesser known pairs. Each gets its paragraph.

Compared to this stream of allusions, summaries, names and dates, Bloom's book is a work of monastic sobriety. His theme, as described by his title, is dauntingly vast, except that Bloom boils his discussion down to a few writers whom he considers most important. He tells his story backward, beginning with Rousseau, the key modern thinker, and devoting a long section to a discussion of *Emile*; he also analyzes four novels that bear Rousseau's mark, by Stendhal, Jane Austen, Flaubert and Tolstoy. Then he repairs to the Renaissance, to a few plays by Shakespeare, and to Montaigne's essay on friendship. He concludes with a study of Plato's *Symposium*, to which he dedicates 120 pages, as opposed to Hagstrum's single page. Bloom writes the kind of study that the Russian Formalists used to call the "history of generals": he ignores soldiers of lower rank. But then this is a book of philosophy, not literary history.

Bloom and Hagstrum also differ tremendously in their approach to scholarship. Hagstrum quotes or mentions thousands of articles by contemporary authors, in the body of his text and in the 85 pages of single-spaced footnotes. (Had it appeared earlier, Bloom's book would no doubt have been reduced to one more footnote.) Bloom quotes only primary sources, requires no more than eleven pages of terse notes and does not adduce a single commentator or critic. His most contemporary authority is Nietzsche.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both these methods of historical writing. Hagstrum's book exudes intellectual honesty; he tries to be fair to everyone and generously takes every opinion into account. I cannot help wondering how useful these thousands of indiscriminately enumerated references really are, whose sole implication seems to me to be that their author is a scholar. (Occasionally Hagstrum's comprehensiveness becomes comic: "Both Julia Kristeva and Billy Graham have denied the need for such implications...") Indeed, Hagstrum's learning has a curiously paralyzing effect: it blurs all the distinctions and makes all the boundaries permeable. Every view turns out to have little known precedents, and every work ends up expressing a view more subtle than was previously believed.

Hagstrum's own position is decidedly moderate, certainly in no danger of provoking passionate hostility. Who, after all, would not concur with the conviction that "justice, benevolence and philanthropy will be well served if in house and home esteem and desire can be brought together"? And who would not share the hope that "some of the hard-won achievements of our heritage will be seriously confronted"? Hagstrum's book is erudite, but it does little to advance our thinking about love. Goethe (as quoted by Hagstrum) said it was necessary to love in order to know; but in this book of knowledge about love Hagstrum has not shared his own love with us, and so our knowledge has not been furthered. Of course, in writing this judiciously, he has merely adhered to the current norms of the humanities and social sciences.

Bloom, on the other hand, overtly

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defies these norms. The absence of passion is hardly his problem. There is an abundance of it in *Love and Friendship*, and an abundance of thought. As is well known, Bloom has—or had, since *Love and Friendship* is published posthumously—strong opinions. His book provokes. The problem is that it also presents itself as a history, though in reverse chronological order, and so it claims a relationship to historical truth. And from this standpoint Bloom's book is rather vulnerable to criticism. Whereas the monotonous Hagstrum is sympathetic to his sources, Bloom is brazenly biased, and his work sometimes borders on distortion. It is fine for Bloom to empathize with Tolstoy, who condemns Anna Karenina, so as to convey his point of view; but couldn't he have shown slightly more feeling for Anna herself? (Five lines by Anna Akhmatova on Anna Karenina are more enlightening on this point than the entirety of Bloom's discussion). It is true that without categories history is sheer chaos; but Bloom's categories—Ancient and Modern, Jews and Greeks—are too crude. They are textbook juxtapositions, not serious instruments of historical inquiry.

One of the only modern books mentioned by Bloom, and naturally by Hagstrum, is *Love in the Western World* by Denis de Rougement. This Swiss author, who wrote his best-seller in the late 1930s, suggested that the whole Western tradition of loving has been dominated by the type of love he called Eros, in which one loves the desire rather than the object of desire, and thus prefers difficulties and obstacles to success; the death of the beloved is the culmination of Eros. (*Tristan* is his central example). De Rougement advocated the gentler Agape, derived from the Christian tradition, in which love is separated from passion, ecstasy and death.

Both our authors find this thesis too schematic, and therefore false. (They do not seem to notice that it was interesting to them and stirred them to thought.) The encyclopedic Hagstrum's condemnation is not surprising; but Bloom wrote a book that, for all its obvious differences, is fundamentally similar to de Rougement's. It, too, is more interesting than true. Yet it may be fairer to judge Bloom's book, like de Rougement's, by the standards of a different genre: myth, not history. De Rougement set out to compose a new myth of Eros and Agape; Bloom, a new myth of the Ancients and the Moderns. And both succeed; their works are evocative, which is all we can ask a myth to be.

Still, are the humanities doomed to vacillate between what is true and what is interesting, between information and thought, between history and myth? In order to arrive at a theory, must one ignore the multitude of facts, and harden one's distinctions, and simplify and invent? The history of culture, or the history of ideas, usually ends up making a reasonable compromise between these extremes; but the tension always exists, and so it is always easy to slide from Scylla to Charybdis. I must confess that I am not immune to this problem myself, and my own preference is for a more fragmentary and speculative reading of history. For behind a myth, I have always believed, is the intention that created it, perhaps a collective intention, and that intention is a kind of appeal to thought; but history, by which I mean the course of human affairs, is the result of forces that are neither numerable, predictable nor controllable by the mind. Thus, my own reading of these two books is closer in method to Bloom than to Hagstrum: rather than attempting to be exhaustive, I shall stick to the highlights.

One of the oldest distinctions about love in Western civilization is the one between "Athens" and "Jerusalem"—between the epic tradition, Greek tragedy and Greek philosophy, on the one hand, and biblical tradition, Jewish and then Christian, on the other. (The distinction between those Scriptural traditions is never as clear cut as it seems; *vide* Hagstrum.) Expressed more abstractly, this is really a distinction between contraction and expansion. For the Hebrew Bible, love has its place in the family, and almost nowhere else; and this accounts for the overriding importance of the family. For the ancient Greeks, however, love is everywhere; it is neither exclusive nor specific to the family, and can also be found in friendship, political life or the thirst for knowledge. The family takes second place to the city.

Christianity accomplished a radical reduction of the Jewish tradition: the family generally retains its importance, but sensual love, Eros, no longer has a place. Worse, the subordination, or even the elimination, of desire is one of the primary tasks of the family. (This precept was not abandoned, as a doctrine, until the twentieth century.) Conjugal life is seen as inevitable, because of the necessity of reproduction, but it is deemed inferior to virginity and chastity. Desire is sinful. Still, while physical life must submit to these spiritual rules, there is another love, a spiritual love for God and his Son, which is imbued with startling sensuality, from the *Song of Songs* to the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine to the mystical testimonies of Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa and beyond.

Another distinction, just as ancient, is the one embodied by two characters in Plato's *Symposium*, one of the most celebrated books about love. These are Aristophanes and Diotima, and they represent, respectively, the love of a person and the love of an ideal. The myth recounted by Aristophanes in Plato's dialogue is so well known because it describes human experience so well, explaining as it does both the stability and the instability of desire, both the innermost feeling in every individual that somewhere there exists someone who is his or her perfect complement *and* the need to renew endlessly the quest for such a someone after each successive disappointment. Even more importantly, perhaps, the character of Aristophanes presents the individual as essentially incomplete; the need to fuse two souls is a part of what it means to be human.

Even as Aristophanes affirms the sociability of man, he does not reduce or erase the inherent singularity and dignity of the individual. The individual one seeks is not the illustration of some abstract notion; the other is an end, not a means. Diotima, by contrast, and Socrates and therefore Plato, interpret love first and foremost as the love of beauty, and only occasionally as the love of a person. In such a view, the complementarity of man and woman matters little. It is impossible to choose between Aristophanes' and Diotima's descriptions of love. They are, in a sense, equally true. They do not describe the same phenomena, they describe two aspects of the same feeling, each as universal as the other.

The discussion of love in our civilization is also embodied by another conceptual couple, the one evoked by Bloom's title, love and friendship. Love is said to affect the senses and the mind; friendship is purely spiritual. Love is about possession; friendship is about choice. Love stems from passion; friendship from reason. The lover is beautiful; the friend is good. The loved one and the lover do not follow parallel paths, since it is possible to love unrequitedly, nor need they resemble each other; but friendship must be reciprocal, and friends tend to resemble, rather than to complement, each other.

For that reason, friendship is not an affirmation of otherness. Its ideal, at least in antiquity, is fusion, the merging of self and other into a perfect union, an ideal transposed by the Romantics to the realm of love. Montaigne, who wrote a memorable essay on friendship, saw this:

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the two souls, he wrote, "mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them, and cannot find it again," and the friend is he "who isn't the other but myself." Love demands the fusion of the body and the spirit while maintaining the difference between the lover and the beloved. But there is no difference between the friend and the befriended; nor does friendship erase the separation between the body and the mind.

Love and friendship compete for first place among human emotions. According to one classical tradition, which runs from Aristotle to Montaigne, friendship, seen as an exclusively masculine relationship, wins out. But this victory of friendship over love did not last long; there were Greeks who also praised the power of love. In our time, it is true, love appears to be the undisputed winner. Bloom believes that our age is not fertile ground for friendship (especially in the United States, where he thinks that the public places usually propitious for forming friendships, such as clubs in England or cafés in France, are unknown). But if we are to believe Montaigne, the sixteenth century was no more conducive to friendship than the twentieth: it is hard, he said, to find real friendship more than once every 300 years.

Which brings us to the categories that play the central structural role in Bloom's account, the Ancients and the Moderns. Bloom's historical scheme, in a nutshell, is as follows. For the Ancients, man is a social animal, a being who blossoms only among his peers; and love and friendship are two ways in which he can live according to his nature. The Moderns, by contrast, concluded, after Hobbes, that in the state of nature man is an isolated individual, hostile to all who surround him. Living in society is therefore a goal to be attained by means of a social contract. As another cure for this primitive state of solitude and aggression, Rousseau suggested love, which, even if it is an illusion and a product of our imagination, will help us overcome our feeling of isolation if we believe in it powerfully enough. Now, Bloom asks, is it wise to base our hopes on what we concede to be an illusion? Not that he doesn't admire Rousseau; but his sympathies are finally with Plato.

Bloom's myth of Ancients and Moderns, although not without connections to the historical past, is an oversimplification. The Ancients were neither as homogeneous nor as categorical as Bloom portrays them. They did claim, it is true, that man participates in a humanity that he shares with others, but it is a relationship of similarity, not of complementarity: one must live in society, but the other, Aristophanes' myth notwithstanding, is not a condition of the self. And alongside the political ideal of the Ancients there is also their ideal of the philosopher, who leads a life of retreat, autarky and self-sufficiency, for whom the *vita contemplativa* may prevail over the *vita activa*. As for Bloom's Moderns, it is true that Hobbes's individualistic psychology was immensely influential; it shaped the thinking, on this particular subject, of writers as different as Kant and Nietzsche, Sade and Freud. Fortunately, however, this individualistic tendency is not wholly representative of modern thought. It certainly does not account for the worldview of Rousseau, to whom Bloom devotes fully a quarter of his book.

Bloom is an accomplished Rousseauian, having skillfully translated and commented on many of Rousseau's writings; and yet his interpretation of his hero seems, at least to me, prejudiced and unfair. Rousseau certainly speaks of solitude in the "state of nature." Yet he is quick to add that this is a mental construct that does not correspond to any reality. Rousseau famously declares a liking for solitary walks, but he does not fail to point out the difference between his personal taste and his conception of the human condition. About the latter, he is categorical: sociability is the constitutive characteristic of the human, from which all its other traits follow. The writer who wrote that "he who willed man to be sociable inclined the globe's axis at an angle to the axis of the universe by a touch of the finger. With this slight motion I see the face of the earth change and the vocation of mankind settled," cannot be accused of treating life in society as merely another human goal. It was no isolate who declared that "our sweetest existence is relative and collective, and the true self is not entirely within ourselves."

Unlike the gods, man is constitutionally incomplete and insufficient. He has, according to Rousseau, a "need for others." This need translates into a feeling that is halfway between love of self (which has no reference to others) and amour propre (which, as Rousseau defines it, involves a slavish need to compare oneself with others). This "need for others" (which Rousseau also calls *l'idée de la considération*) is the need, neither degrading nor reprehensible, for recognition. With this idea Rousseau proves himself, I think, a better psychologist than Aristotle; and he also shows himself to be a keen observer when he describes how love, born of chance and illusion, may nevertheless gradually acquire the force of an absolute.

Thus the original opposition between the Ancients and the Moderns, of which Bloom is so fond, must give way to a plurality of ancients and a plurality of moderns without degenerating into a chaos of opinions. The same can be said of Bloom's discussion of morality. Bloom suggests that, for the Ancients, morality was natural: by behaving in a moral way,

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Edison's Candle

In 1991, Christopher Whittle announced a revolution: His new Edison Project would create a national chain of innovative for-profit schools that would turn around American education. Whittle had already caused a sensation with his Channel One, which offers TV sets and satellite dishes to schools in return for a guarantee that students will watch a daily 12-minute program with 2 minutes of commercials, so the Edison Project was followed with great interest. But a few weeks ago, the revolution stalled as Whittle announced that the project would now concentrate on managing existing schools and would open only a few new ones. What happened?

According to Whittle's original timetable for the Edison Project, 200 "campuses" serving 150,000 students were to open by 1996, and by 2010, 2 million students would be attending Edison schools.

The Edison Project schools would be important, Whittle said, not just because of the number of kids attending them but also because of the influence these schools would have on U.S. education.

Whittle gave lip service to the idea that his schools would be good medicine—especially for public schools. Since Edison schools would offer fresh ideas, existing schools would be able to learn from them (and perhaps purchase their teaching programs, hardware, software, consulting services, etc.). So while he was making money, Whittle would be helping schools that were already out there.

Whittle's real message seemed to be that there was no point in thinking of fixing public education; it would have to be replaced with something entirely different.

But Whittle's real message seemed to be that there was no point in thinking of fixing public education; it would have to be replaced with something entirely different. He often compared the difference between our current schools and the ones he would invent to the difference between a candle and Thomas Edison's incandescent light. And, as he said, there is no way to make a light bulb out of a candle:

> We need a complete redesign of the way we teach our children. This means we cannot begin with the system we now have. When Edison invented electric illumination, he didn't tinker with candles to make them burn better. Instead he created something brilliantly new: the light bulb.

Whittle also liked to compare our current education system to the disastrous command economies of Eastern Europe. When he first announced the Edison Project, Eastern Europe had just gotten rid of Communism, and the Berlin Wall had just come down. What had made these miracles possible? Whittle's answer was "West Berlin"—these changes would never have taken place if West Berlin hadn't been there. And he said of the Edison Project, "We will build West Berlin." In other words, the U.S. education system, like the Communist system, was so bad the only way to deal with it was to destroy it and build a new one—with the West Berlin of the Edison schools as the shining example.

But Whittle and Benno Schmidt, the former president of Yale University whom Whittle brought on to be president of the Edison Project, have run into financial trouble. They have not been able to raise the $2.5 billion needed for the first 100 schools. Moreover, it turns out that they made a disastrous miscalculation about how much money it would take, not just to run the new schools but also to build them or rent space for them. So the Edison Project's mission has been totally rewritten. Instead of creating a revolutionary new system, it will concentrate, as Whittle recently announced, on managing existing schools.

This ideological about-face raises some serious questions about Whittle's credibility. Whittle said that the entire education system had to be dismantled and built again according to a new model. But now, instead of creating West Berlin, he's saying, "If you want to hire us, we can run the old system. We can give you a new, improved version of Communism; we don't need West Berlin." And instead of insisting that only inventing the light bulb will be good enough, he is saying he can make candles that will do just fine.

What is it Whittle now sees that makes him claim he can salvage an education system that he claimed, a short time ago, was irredeemable? Was all he said just adtalk? And is that what it is now?

The idea Chris Whittle was selling—and that he has now given up—is one he shares with a number of critics of public education. They believe that a public system is bound to be crippled by bureaucracy and plagued by poor student achievement, and the solution is to replace public education with a private system. But among other industrialized countries all over the world—France and Germany and Japan and Australia—we find no example of a country that has entrusted the education of its children to a private system. Instead, they all have fine public systems. There is no reason why we should not have one too.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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the human being shows his (Bloom does not bother about her) true nature. The Moderns, however, believe otherwise: that in the state of nature *homo homini lupus*, that morality is antithetical to human nature. We must overcome our impulses, said Kant. And we know the rest: Kant's grandchildren came to prefer nature to morality. Still, things are not as straightforward as they seem. It is hard, for example, to assimilate Rousseau's position to Kant's, even though the latter was inspired by the former, since Rousseau describes pity as a "natural emotion, the source of all social virtues."

There were a number of Moderns who turned the relationship between love and morality into a subject of heated debate. In Stendhal, one gets the impression that love, as long as it is a passion, as long as it is sincere, can justify anything. Julien Sorel is not condemned for attempting murder, since his action was motivated by love. And this broaches one of the central themes of modernity, which is the usurpation of the demands of morality by the demands of authenticity, or intensity, or beauty. Baudelaire went so far as to insist that

> the body's beauty is a noble gift
> which wrests a pardon for all infamy
> (tr. Richard Howard)

Of course, not all the Moderns share this opinion (which, in any case, is more of a reaction to the former way of thinking than a sincere conviction). In the earlier view love was deemed, if not immoral, at least inferior to conventional morality. Still, there is a considerable distance between liberating oneself from the excessive restrictions of tradition and promoting their exact opposite, and one should hesitate to make this leap. Must we, then, settle on a permanent division in our lives, on a rigid separation between passion, palpitation and intensity, on the one hand, and virtue, decency and dignity, on the other? Or is love, in and of itself, moral? The lines are not so easily drawn. When we see an old man in a relationship of love or intense friendship, for example, we are not only happy for him, we also admire him. He seems to be joyously affirming his humanity, despite the weariness of his age: we observe, in his behavior, a value.

I do not mean to suggest that love and friendship must always be valued over morality, always triumph in such a conflict; but they do reveal the best part of our being. Love and friendship do not replace morality, but they share its source, which is the recognition simultaneously of the uniqueness of every man and woman and of the sociability that is constitutive of the human. Bloom's book bespeaks a great admiration for love and a great admiration for friendship: "Both love and friendship are splendid things, peaks of humanity, plausible candidates for election as the highest end of life. The capacity for love or friendship always indicates a superior and generous nature, and when we see them in life or art, they always engage our sympathies." This is Bloom at his best.

The modern era is characterized by a tendency to concentrate all our affections and needs on the relationship between two individuals: a man and a woman, in the case of heterosexual couples. Hagstrum shows that the union of desire and respect has existed since high antiquity, but today it is the rule. In the Western world, we refuse to consider the social and reproductive function of a couple separately from its erotic aspect. The recent transformations in the social status of women have brought them closer to men, and opened up, within the loving couple, a new field of competition—but this also makes friendship possible. Thus my wife is not only my lover, she is also the mother of my children, and also my best friend.

Montaigne dreamed of such a fusion of love and friendship, only to proclaim it impossible. The reasons for his pessimism were not very persuasive. Still, it is indeed imprudent to put all of one's eggs in the same basket. The desire for reciprocity ("friendship") and the need for complementarity ("love") provide the basis for one of the most stubborn human contradictions. It is far from certain that all our attachments and affections, parental love and erotic love, passion for our friends and passion for our vocations, will go harmoniously together, as we so ardently would like to believe.

Both Hagstrum and Bloom display an exhilarating respect for the writers and thinkers who preceded us; and they do not attempt to stretch them or to force them into a Procrustean bed of modern cliches, Marxist or psychoanalytical, Heideggerian or feminist. But Bloom's problem is that he does not sufficiently respect his own contemporaries. This is one of the most unpleasant aspects of his style. A few thinkers of our own time, such as Sartre and Buber, must content themselves with brief and disdainful remarks. Bloom seems to have flattered himself that he went into the desert alone—a strangely "modern" belief for a man who prefers all that is "ancient."

He also has another modern weakness: his vision is skewed by a fear of boredom. What interest can be found, he wonders, in a marriage in which ex-lovers live "watching their beauties disappear slowly with age while they become bored with each other," or in the existence of a mother who "lives in the bor-

Hybrid Magnolias in Late April

You bent to whisper to a small granddaughter,
Exposing the bald priestly back of your head,
Lifting her then and handing her to me:
See you in April.

Never the same, these northern magnolias,
As the great starred candelabra ghosting,
Even before I left them, the deep-shaded
Lawns of my boyhood.

And yet these too break wholly into blossom,
What somebody called the early petal-fall:
I walk out one day and the limbs are bare;
Then they are burdened

With the flared tulip shapes of opening blooms.
Two rainy indoor days in a row, then out,
The sun is out, and a fallen constellation
Litters the grasses.

What would you be up to this April morning?
Muttering to yourself, looking high and low
For the good stick fashioned out of laurel?
I have it with me.

Patience. Lean back and light another Lucky.
Whatever will kill you dozes in your rib cage.
Read a few more pages in the *Little*
Flowers of St. Francis,

Then throw a window open on the fragrance
Of even this, the northernmost magnolia.
By now the child you lifted in your arms has
Slipped from their circle

To cherish and polish your crooked old stick
Into a poem of her own so tender and deft
I can hold its wrong end and reach you the worn
Thumb of its handle.

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ing details of taking care of her children"? Bloom liked to think of himself as a "Platonist," but in fact he was more of a closet Nietzschean. Deep down he believed that whereas Plato tells us what is good, Nietzsche tells us what is true.

Bloom's prose is strewn with jolly anachronisms, and they have a certain charm. Pedantry is foreign to him. For Bloom, the teaching of philosophy is an erotic activity; one gets the feeling that, even when treating the most serious of subjects, he never relinquishes his leather jacket. All this is very refreshing. Unfortunately, the whole book is not quite on the same level. Perhaps he would have put the finishing touches on it had he lived; but what we have here are a few pages of generalizations, separated by very long rambling descriptions and summaries. The writers who are still to come may be reassured: the ideal book about love has not yet been written.

TZVETAN TODOROV is the author most recently of *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism and Exoticism in French Thought* (Harvard University Press). This article was translated by Alba Branca.

Survival of the Cruelest

BY CRAIG SELIGMAN

The Road to Wellville by T. Coraghessan Boyle

(Viking, 476 pp., $22.50)

A sanitarium is a funny place to set a novel if you don't believe in cures. But the Battle Creek Sanitarium, temple to healthy vegetarian living and stomping ground of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943), apostle of colonic hygiene and inventor of the cornflake, is where T. Coraghessan Boyle, a pessimist if there ever was one, has set *The Road to Wellville*, in the years 1907 and 1908. Boyle's pitiless and brilliant first novel, *Water Music* (1981), unfolds around the British exploration of the Niger circa 1800; *World's End* (1987) shifts back and forth between a Hudson River community in the seventeenth and twentieth centuries; and he has riffed on Carry Nation and Robert Johnson and characters from Hemingway and Gogol, among others. He has a gift for animating bygone eras, partly because his somewhat fusty, slightly hyperbolic language—probably learned at Mailer's knee—is so offhand in its mixture of the antiquated and the up-to-date. The anachronism soothes, directs your attention away from the verbal structures and toward the plot. And everything, in Boyle, is a handmaiden to the plot.

More happens in one of Boyle's short stories than in most post-Victorian novels. He plops his characters onto the page with a minimum of fuss and off they run, the action filling in their contours. What interests him is behavior, not motive, and even behavior only to the extent that it oils the Rube Goldberg contraptions of his plots. His preferred way of structuring a book, and frequently even a story, is to intertwine two or more barely related strands. Thus *Water Music* darts back and forth between the historical figure of Mungo Park, the explorer, and Ned Rise, a fictional London lowlife. *World's End* offers parallel tales in different centuries, the modern characters helplessly perpetrating the same betrayals and blunders that sank their ancestors. In *East is East* (1990), a comedy about backbiting writers in an artists' colony alternates with the trials of a Japanese sailor who has jumped ship and is hiding out in the nearby swamp.

The strands in *The Road to Wellville*—that is, the principal characters—are three: Dr. Kellogg, master in his marble-walled domain and an insufferable quack; Will Lightbody, a patient at the San (as it's informally known) with his wife, Eleanor; and Charlie Ossining, confidence man and would-be entrepreneur. This time the parts are even less bound up with one another than in the past, but the novel hardly suffers for their diffuseness. Boyle has always known how to edit so that his jump cuts are pleasurably violent. Often he'll end a chapter on a cliffhanger, and the escape from the maximum-tension situation comes as a relief. He'll return two or three chapters later, after the crisis has been resolved, then back up and tell you what happened. There's a small drawback to this approach in that once you know the outcome, the flashback account, no matter how harrowing, loses some of its force. Which is fine, because Boyle harrows like a professional sadist.

Boyle only pretends to be a comic novelist, though from the standpoint of funny he's pretty convincing. His worldview—set forth now in five novels and three collections of stories—is a black-hearted fatalism: you are who you are, you poor schmuck, and there's not a damn thing you can do about it, because something in the cosmos (he never gets around to discussing what, exactly) has stacked the cards against you and in somebody else's favor. Staging tragic ordeals as slapstick lightens the load on the reader's emotions, though it also robs his heroes of the dignity that is classically their due. But it doesn't rob them of their pluck. "He clung there, a man with a purpose, a man who would fight and scratch, manipulate and maneuver—a man who would survive." (Ned Rise in *Water Music.*) "He was down, but not defeated. No, never defeated." (Jeremias Van Brunt in *World's End.*) And it's the same with Charlie Ossining in *The Road to Wellville*:

> Somehow, when he rose up off that bench and stepped into the surging crowd, he found the strength to fight down the fear and loathing that ran through his veins like an infection.... He felt the smile leap to his face, tasted the sweet syrup of the lies gathering on his tongue, saw the world come into focus as if for the first time.

I'm not down yet, these Sisyphuses keep muttering as they get up—slowly, painfully—and dust themselves off. But Boyle never lets them stay up for long; he keeps a finger pressed maliciously against their rock. The novels are treadmills—no one makes it from point A to point B. Their only real progress is from resolve to resignation (if not despair) as it dawns on them that they'll never make it: once a chump, always a chump.

Boyle paints the world as a jungle (often literally, as in *Water Music* and *East is East*), a Nietzschean bad dream of the strong eating the weak and the wealthy cheating the poor. "I've always written about man as an animal species among other animals, competing for limited resources," he has explained. For him society splits into swindlers and suckers, and he sees nothing particularly admirable about being a sucker.

In *The Road to Wellville*, Charlie Ossining is the sucker trying to ascend to the status of swindler, this book's Ned Rise (whose name was no coincidence). That makes him the character Boyle has the most fun visiting disaster on. Charlie meets Will and Eleanor on a train to Battle Creek early in the book. They are bound for the San; he's on his way to

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make his fortune (he thinks) in breakfast foods—the Kellogg Company, an outgrowth of the doctor's nutritional researches, and its main rival, Post, having by this time put the town on the business map.

Charlie isn't the first of Boyle's characters to be stitched together from contradictions, but he's the one on whom the needlework is most exposed. In one chapter he's a shark out to flimflam every moneybags he can into making an investment in Per-Fo (for "perfect food"). The next time we see him he's an honest entrepreneur-in-embryo, with dreams of life as a breakfast-food magnate. The two sides never gel. Instead we get two characters, one sweet, one sleazy, one ingenuous and one canny, together in a single body, if not on a single page.

Good or bad, poor Charlie faces one crippling setback after another. The stars start fading from his eyes as soon as he steps off the train and learns that he is one among a legion of get-rich-quick schemers who have descended on Battle Creek envisioning a cereal bonanza. In Boyle's familiar pattern, he is overworked, humiliated, defrauded, pummeled and punished. He plays the fool over and over and over, because that's his nature: he *is* a fool.

John Kellogg is nobody's fool. Boyle's Kellogg is a man devoted to health fads, without any real concern for his wealthy patients and none at all for the seriously ill (who are too likely to die and become "the very worst sort of advertisement"). By the end he is demonstrably no better than a murderer—a "beast of the jungle," Boyle calls him, though of course that tag implies a certain admiration, too. He couldn't care less about the doctor's place in nutritional history, but then Boyle doesn't view history as a continuum: the past, as he contemptuously presents it, isn't the foundation of the present, it's the discarded husk. His Georgian London and Dutch New York are sewers of the most appalling injustice and inequity and moral ignorance. Kellogg, with his cracked faith in colonic irrigation and biologic living and, above all, strict sexual abstinence, is a mascot for the benightedness of times gone by. (There is no mascot for progress.)

The central character, Will Lightbody, is harder to place in Boyle's schema. Alcoholism and addiction have done their damage, and now he can't even eat a hamburger without giving himself fits of pain. He has lost control of his life, and of his wife, a neurasthenic harpy who has fallen for the biologic-living craze and would be happy to settle into permanent hypochondria at the San. But Will, who is genuinely ill, hates the place.

In the Kellogg program to restore his health, Will suffers under a barrage of hair-raising treatments, beginning with a nauseating all-milk diet. But Boyle focuses so single-mindedly on the doctor's mania for control that the efficacy of his strategies never really comes under debate. Will isn't faced with much of a choice. If he goes off the diet, stalks into town and gorges himself on hamburgers and whiskey, he winds up doubled over in pain and close to death. But to submit to the odious regimen, or even embrace it like the other zombies at the San, is spiritual suicide—which, in Boyle's hairy-fisted scheme, means loss of manhood.

And Will's manhood is already being severely challenged by his wife. Sex is strictly forbidden at the San, which is fine with Eleanor. Again, Boyle doesn't show much interest in the psychology of repression. He just wants to demonstrate that it's a lousy idea, and typically, he loads the dice. He sends Eleanor off to an even bigger quack than Kellogg, a Teutonic therapist who "manipulates her womb" to orgasm (which is to say, you get what you need).

In her husband's case he moves onto more taboo (and more novel) terrain. Once Will is deprived of sex and palatable food and placed on the Kellogg regimen of five enemas a day, his anus becomes his only source of pleasure. Boyle makes the connection explicit the first time Will receives an enema from his pretty nurse:

> Her hands. The warm bulb of the apparatus. What was he doing? What was going on? "Eleanor," he blurted. "My wife. Where's Eleanor?"
>
> "Hush," Irene whispered. "She's fine. She's on the second floor, room two-twelve, no doubt undergoing this very same procedure ... to flush her system, relax her."
>
> Will was stunned. "Then she, she won't be staying here, with me?"
>
> The nurse's voice caressed his ear, soothing, soft, as much a part of him as the secret voice that spoke inside his head. "Oh, no. The Chief keeps couples separate here. For therapeutic reasons, of course. Our patients need quiet, rest—any sort of sexual stimulation could be fatal."
>
> *Sexual stimulation.* Why did those two words suddenly sound so momentous?
>
> "Relax," she whispered, and all at once Will felt the hot fluid surprise of it, his insides flooding as if a dam had burst, as if all the tropical rivers of the world were suddenly flowing through him, irrigating him, flushing, cleansing, churning away at his deepest nooks and recesses in a tumultuous cathartic rush. It was the most mortifying and exquisite moment of his life.

But this notion of enema-as-sex shows up just once more, nearly 300 pages later. ("'And now'—and the soft soothing whisper of the words made him tingle as if it were seltzer water and not blood percolating through his veins—'are you ready for your irrigation?'") Boyle doesn't examine what it might suggest about the doctor's own sexuality—as far as we can see, he doesn't have any—or explore it any more deeply in Will. Instead he just drops it. Maybe the suggestion of inversion in a character who is fighting for his manhood is too explicit, or too troubling. Or maybe Victorianism is not as dead as Boyle, who has a field day mocking the doctor's square ideals, would like to think. Because in the end he frames the case in startlingly Victorian terms: to recover his manhood, Will has to banish the influence of Kellogg, vanquish the womb manipulator, and reestablish his dominance over his wife. Boyle has never sounded like a troglodyte before—in fact *World's End*, his most overtly political book, suggests Tom Robbins in his hippy-dippy phase. But this novel will make ideal reading matter for Republican bedsides.

Boyle's pyrotechnical exhibitionism recalls Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson and, of course, Mailer—like them, he makes a virtue of excess—but the author who comes through is, for all the bleakness of his vision, a sweeter, less troubled man. The darkness that besets his work is cosmic; personally, he seems lighthearted and, on the whole, free of anguish. In temperament, the novelist he evokes isn't his hero, Dickens, but Fielding: his interest in neurotic states goes only as deep as their comic possibilities.

Picaresque is the natural form for a writer like that: riots of plot without a lot of ink wasted on psychological analysis. (Sociological analysis is something else; the brief descriptions of Japanese society in *East is East* are the most brilliant parts of the book.) Boyle loves a mess. He loves chaos. He loves marshes and jungles, and he loves the jungle of language: luxuriant sentences overgrown with lianas of lists, sesquipedalian words hanging down like rare fruits. For all its exoticism, though, his prose is lucid to the point of transparency. It doesn't require much deeper concentration than a good newspaper (though it does require a dictionary).

It would help if he made bigger demands on his readers. For all the surface messiness of his fiction, Boyle's fatalism is reductive (you're born to screw or born to get screwed), and as a result his comedy tends not merely toward the pop but toward the lite. You may read compulsively to find out what happens, but when you finish, the elaborate edifices can seem as lightweight as jokes. (This is espe-

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cially true of the stories.) You come away feeling that very little is at stake. Yes, he takes risks—big risks—but they're technical risks; he throws himself into spots that demand writerly bravado, but he seldom puts anything more than his technique on the line. His artistry always surprises, always amuses, always impresses. And yet there is something strangely impersonal, something inexplicably bland about his sentences. His voice isn't one of those that make you love a writer for saying things in a way that nobody else would ever put them. All the lavish wordplay, the go-for-broke imagery and the wild, dumb jokes don't make a style—they're a substitute for a style.

East is East is the closest Boyle has come to an aesthetic manifesto. He uses the artists' colony setting to jeer at his recondite contemporaries (writers who "frowned ascetically over their incomprehensible texts"), and he sums up his opinion of their work in this description of an evening musicale:

> After dinner, there was a recital by Patsy Arena, a squat, broad-faced woman of Cuban extraction who looked as if she'd stepped out of a Botero painting. She was new to the colony, having come just that week at the invitation of Clara Kleinschmidt, and she played the old Steinway in the front parlor as if she were tenderizing meat....
>
> *Bang!* Patsy Arena hit the piano like a boxer. Silence. *One and two, one and two,* she whispered, bobbing her frizzy head. *Bang! Bang!* she slammed at the keyboard with the ball of her fist. And then: nothing. For three full agonizing minutes she sat rigid, staring at the cheap plastic alarm clock perched atop the gleaming ebony surface before her. Finally the alarm went off—*ding-ding-ding*—and *Bang!* she hit the keyboard. The piece was called *Parfait in Chrome,* and it went on for forty-five minutes.

Boyle is no philistine, but he's suspicious of an avant-garde that doesn't aspire to popularity. His own allusions, which are plentiful and scholarly, are never snotty or obscure; he wants you to enjoy his exhibitionism. And there's certainly nothing compromising about going after a large audience—in theory, anyway. There is a note of compromise in the new book, though. The viciously funny narrative, a long progress of failures and mortifications, ends with a jarringly ebullient, optimistic coda. The last ten pages feel about as genuine as a happy ending tacked on to a Hollywood movie to sell it. (And guess what: *The Road to Wellville* has already been sold to the movies.)

Asked in an interview once to name his greatest source of joy in life, Boyle shot back, "Knocking my enemies dead flat and triumphing over them." You hear the same sanguinary note when he talks about sales. "Each book I put out, I think, 'Goodbye, Updike and Mailer, forget it'.... I joke at Viking that I'm going to make them forget the name of Stephen King forever, I'm going to sell so many copies."

If there's no mock modesty, though, it has to do with more than arrogance. Boyle considers modesty an error—an *aesthetic* error. In *East is East,* Ruth Dershowitz, the writer who, as a matter of integrity, avoids theatrics and lets her work speak for itself, puts her audience to sleep when she gives a reading. It's her nemesis, Jane Shine—who goes in for stark lighting and a dramatic costume and a diva's hairdo—who holds them spellbound. And you only have to study Boyle's jacket portraits, with his goatee and his ear clip and his dark, Byronic gaze, to know which one of them he identifies with. He says it himself: "I believe writers are people who should attract attention, and I dress accordingly." He's a ham right down to his splendid middle name. Coraghessan isn't his given name—he was born plain Thomas John Boyle—but a family name that he took when he was 17: "I suppose it's an affectation, of a sort, but what the hell. There are 5 billion of us on the planet all screaming for attention."

The picture of cutthroat competition in *East is East* is a rotten thing for a writer to carry around in his heart, though. Henry James's celebrated remark that the three important things in life are to be kind, to be kind and to be kind is alien to any quality you can find in Boyle's work, which sends off its most brilliant sparks when it gets darkest—at the end of *Water Music,* and in the dry-eyed, unsparing story "Greasy Lake." Observing the struggle to dominate without recoiling from its cruelty takes Boyle close to greatness. Buying into it is what coarsens him. *He* wants to dominate. His motives aren't pure. Are anybody's? Maybe not, but he relishes their impurity. He recognizes his own pugnacious macho streak, and he loves it, and it vitiates his work, not so much because it's ugly as because it's juvenile. He can write, and he can imagine, with more energy than any of his contemporaries. But energy isn't enough; there's only so far you can go on sheer technique. And until he goes further, he'll remain a satirist cut off from the oxygen of morality, a superb, hilarious novelist but, when you get down to it, an inessential one—an evil clown who slips from your memory as soon as the show is over.

CRAIG SELIGMAN has written about books and movies for *The Threepenny Review, The Village Voice* and *The Modern Review.*

TRB *continued from page 6*

that's actually worth $16 an hour.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that NAFTA will increase the U.S. gross domestic product by a measly quarter of one percent. But even that is nothing to sneeze at—$15 or $20 billion a year. Spending some of that money on NAFTA's losers seems only fair. And if it greased the wheels of the deal by changing the minds of a few opponents, it would enable everybody to come out ahead.

But here we come to a second way the politics of NAFTA are paradigmatic of America's larger political problem. In today's reflexively anti-government climate it is nearly unthinkable to propose spending, say, $5 billion a year on compensation and retraining for victims of NAFTA—even if this would enable the country as a whole to gain the $15 billion benefits of the agreement (and leaving aside the potential value to society of the retraining itself). Labor Secretary Robert Reich has proposed merging all the government's various worker retraining schemes into one program, budgeted at $1.1 billion, with a pie-in-the-sky goal of $3.3 billion in 1998. And he's a big-spending liberal.

Back when I took introductory economics, they taught us that increasing capitalist prosperity brought with it increasing financial equality. And during the postwar period that seemed to be true. These days, though, the relationship seems to be reversed. The global economic rationalization of which NAFTA is a part is increasing the returns to skill and education, and therefore increasing inequality even as it makes us all richer on average.

NAFTA thus is typical of the decisions policymakers will face more and more: whether to take steps that will increase national prosperity at the price of increased inequality. To eschew increased national wealth because it will generate a few individual losers seems insane. Yet those losers, or people who fear they will be among those losers, will be able to block healthy changes like NAFTA—and will be justified in trying to do so, unless some of the gains to society as a whole are used to stem their losses.

So Republicans owe NAFTA more than just a "yes" vote. They owe it—and their alleged capitalist principles—a willingness to support generous government programs to help the folks who understandably fear the changes that will benefit us all.

But for now, a "yes" vote will do.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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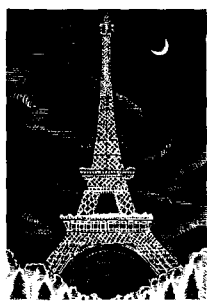
PARIS DIARIST

Larger than life

WHEN MY FAMILY AND I ARRIVED in Paris late in August of 1992 for a stay we expected to last only a year, we found our *entrée* to be a *rentrée* for everybody around us. The shoe repairman, then the pharmacist, then the butcher crawled back to business after a month's sunshine in the south. The distinction between Paris on- and off-duty is actually a lot subtler in our subdued seventh-arrondissement neighborhood than in habitually lively ones like, say, the Marais or the Latin Quarter. Even on a bustling Saturday afternoon in June, the period when my well-behaved neighbors are most visible, I've had the queer sensation of swimming in a vivid, deep-sea silence. How do these people make so little noise? Even their dogs know better than to bark. The pert ticking of high heels, the softly chanted *bonjour Madame*, the occasional high-pitched but good-tempered question posed by the professionally coiffed 3-year-old to her father: this is about as deafening as the Faubourg St.-Germain—or our corner of it, anyway—ever gets. I'm not complaining. We've managed for more than a year now not to get evicted despite the refusal of our two girls to stop whooping like banshees. But last November, when invited by friends to still-balmy Nice for a few days, I woke up one morning to the sound, beneath my open window, of Italian voices rising with the sun. They were arguing, and it was clear that very soon both sides were to be forgiven. Seized, suddenly, by love for my fellow man, I experienced a sort of two-tiered epiphany. I realized I had never awakened to a real street conversation in Paris (and to this day that's still true). And I said to myself, here's the problem with the world: The Italians are too Italian, and nobody else is Italian enough.

IT'S A REVELATION I PROBABLY wouldn't have stumbled upon if I weren't half-Italian myself. My dear mother (may she rest in a peace she never knew in life) was too Italian for her own good, and experience has taught me that I am too. I wouldn't give up memories of a childhood, though, in which nearly every day after school I walked into a house that was literally vibrating with opera music turned all the way up. So when I read this September that Luciano Pavarotti would be giving an open-air concert in the Champ-de-Mars, at the feet of the Eiffel Tower, the news seemed directed at me. Afraid we'd lose the girls among the tens of thousands of people who would be seated on the grass, I decided that our family should have its own party at home, as the concert was to be televised live. We had a lot to celebrate. We'd lived in Paris a year and hadn't gone broke—no, not quite, though this will surely come in the fullness of time, or next week. And in deciding to stay another year we had achieved our own *rentrée*, just like the lucky Parisians who (quite different from us, in fact) could afford to be blasé and even bored by the thought.



SO WE BURIED OURSELVES under a blanket on the couch, and we watched as the sun set and the Eiffel Tower on the screen—just a mile away, in reality—grew brighter and brighter. Maybe it was the prospect of being allowed to stay up until nearly midnight that made the kids content to have culture rammed down their throats as it emanated from Pavarotti's. Or maybe it was the sight of the Eiffel Tower itself, which has taken on the air of a kindly, protective witness to their lives, like a very tall aunt. Here she was, dressed for the opera in her evening lights, no longer their daily guardian on the Champ-de-Mars playground but a symbol of—something—shared by the world. When Pavarotti began to sing, the girls entered into a rare, awestruck silence. Like the Eiffel Tower, like his handkerchief, like his voice, this man was larger than life. Even in the pre-recorded interview, broadcast at the intermission, he was just as sweeping as one could wish. He hoped to live to 165, but he'd been ready to die since he was 20. He adored women, found them all fascinating. (The French reporter nodded vigorously. In this country, no interview with a man is complete without the invitation—always accepted—to extoll that marvelous species, the *human female*.) Pavarotti said he'd been brought up by a mother, a grandmother and two aunts; now he had a wife, two daughters and five secretaries. He grinned blindingly. Here was proof that there are moments when life calls for someone as Italian as possible. To their credit the French, applauding for encores at concert's end, seemed to know it. The last aria, predictably, was the insomniac "Nessun Dorma," with its promise of triumph at dawn, and when I turned, nearly in tears, to see how the children liked it, they were—shouldn't I have predicted this too?—asleep.

THEY MAY BE A LITTLE TOO CIVILized, but the French hardly seem a people disinclined to excess or the fantastic. After all, they love Pavarotti. And nothing could be more preposterously over-the-top than the issue of *Elle* I came upon at the hairdresser's in June. In it the actress-singer Arielle Dombasle, a Barbie doll look-alike who was soon to marry the philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, modeled a wedding gown by Karl Lagerfeld that had a nearly life-sized crucifix hanging from the neck. She was letting us view her last fitting at Chanel because there would be no photographers at the ceremony; she and Bernard-Henri didn't want publicity. Obligingly, though, she recounted their first meeting with what you'd have to call an operatic flourish. In Milan, in front of La Scala, their eyes had met and "an immediate vertigo, a reciprocal ecstasy" ensued. He asked her to come along to a lecture. She said she had to shop for shoes instead, and would meet him later. Arriving an hour late, she feared she had lost him. But he had waited. They went to his hotel and there commenced a long—wouldn't you know?—"metaphysical discussion." Now, years later, the philosopher was planning a trip to Sarajevo just days after the wedding. His bride-to-be loyally defended his solo agenda. She and Bernard-Henri were "two parallel individuals who protect each other, complete each other and understand each other in half a word." Pluckily she added: "I don't accompany him to Bosnia. He doesn't come with me to Chanel."

WAS THIS MY FAVORITE LIGHT reading of the summer? Or was it in *Paris Match* two weeks later, with the same photo of the cross-bearing but otherwise blissful Arielle, this time on the cover—and half a dozen more smiling pictures inside of the intimate wedding, taken by the photographers who weren't there? The bride had even arranged for studio portraits of her platform wedding shoes—one for the ceremony, another gold-embroidered evening pair with her initials sewn into the right heel and the groom's into the left. With vertiginous ecstasies like this to partake of, I don't know how anybody is ever going to pry me away from Paris. Often, when the weather's fine, we walk (in our dead-give-away American tennis shoes) to the Champ-de-Mars after dinner. As if means have become ends, the Eiffel Tower points like a larger-than-life compass needle in the direction, ultimately, of itself.

MARY JO SALTER

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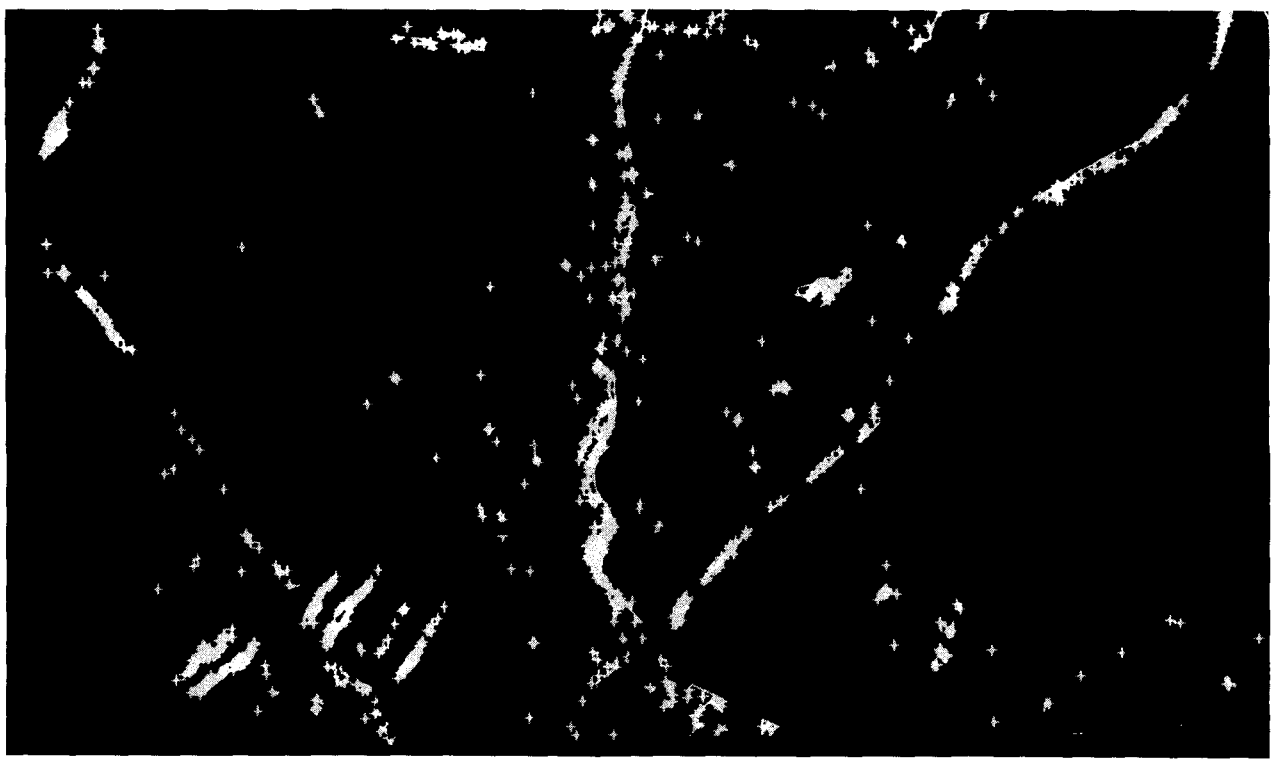

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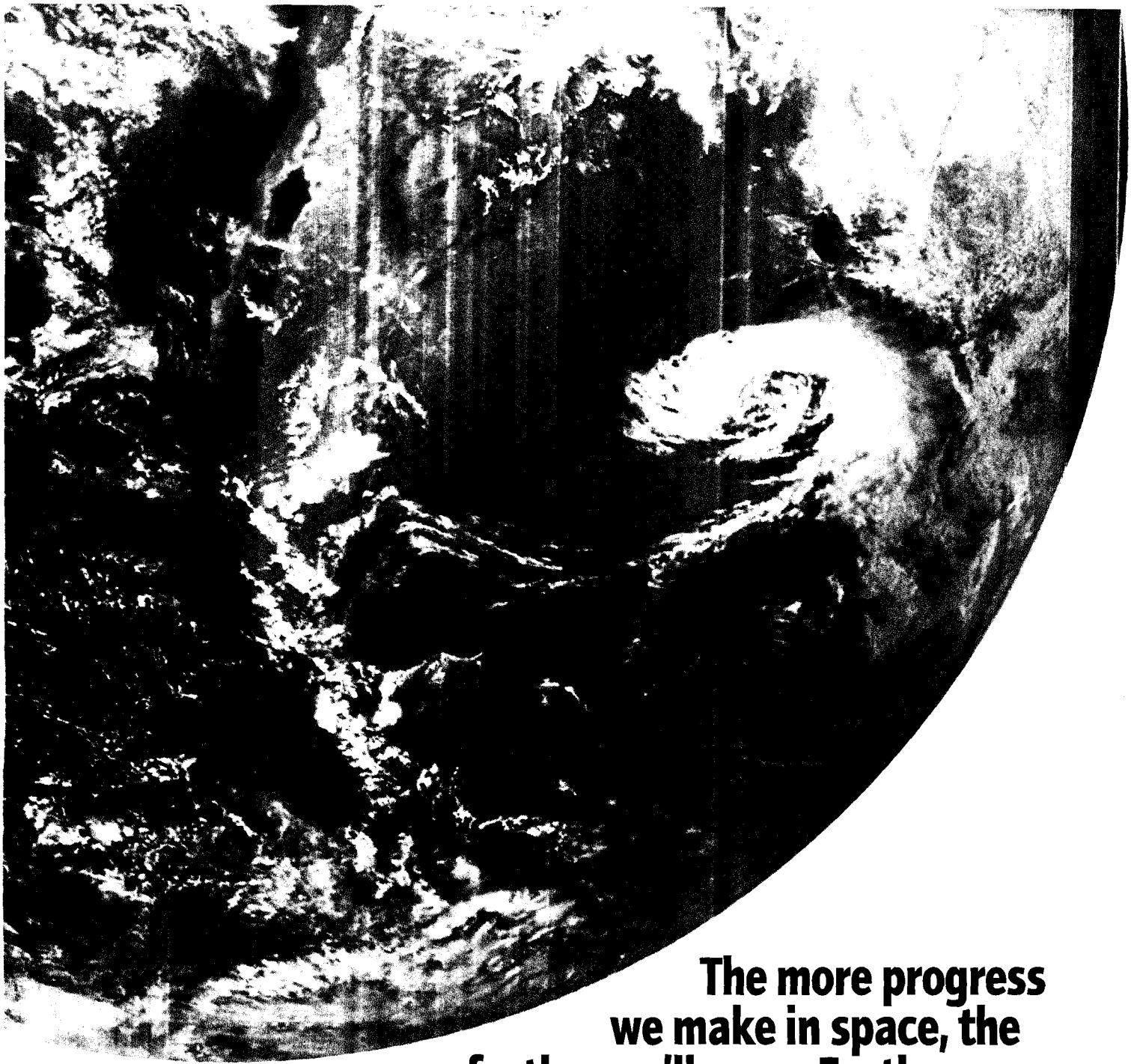

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